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[THE SCOTSWOMAN'S STORY.]

## MISS ARLINGCOURT'S WILL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Leaves of Fate," "Octavia's Pride," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XI.

LUCY stood a moment before her mirror the next morning, running her fingers lightly through her fair curls, and trying to cheat herself into believing she was not quite ready to descend. The bow of her blue sash troubled her likewise, and it was tied and retied; but it was not the ringlets or the sash which really hindered her. She had always a secret dread of any *tête-à-tête* with the co-heir; but on this day it was almost a morbid alarm.

"What ails me?" exclaimed she, at length, turning resolutely towards the door. "One would think I was afraid of Reynold Raleigh."

When she reached the library, and gliding in, met the new look upon Mr. Raleigh's face, she settled the vague doubt with a decided assertion.

"Oh, I am dreadfully afraid of him! What is he going to say to me?"

He was very assiduous in his gentlemanly attentions, and rising from his seat, set her a chair by the table, came forward with a beaming smile, and took her hand in his.

"Good-morning, my dear Miss Lucy. You look as fresh and charming as one of the roses from the garden. It is plain to see you had a refreshing night's rest."

"Thank you, yes. I rested very sweetly," replied Lucy, shrinking back a little, and withdrawing her hand as swiftly as possible.

"I am glad to hear it, for I have been a little afraid that all this company was too much for you. I quite distressed myself thinking you were looking pale the other day. You are quite sure you enjoy this company, and that I ought not to send them away?"

"Quite sure of both," faltered Lucy. "You said you wished to speak with me. Is it anything particular?"

"Yes, very particular. I wish to relieve an anxiety which has weighed upon me for several days. You know—I am sure you know, Miss Lucy, what deep interest I take in your welfare—how much solicitude for your happiness."

Miss Lucy was silent, in spite of the inquiring tone of the close of the sentence.

"Indeed, I am sure you know it, although, alas! the deeper sentiment inspired has been hidden in my own breast," he resumed, heaving a pathetic sigh, and putting one hand on his heart in dramatic fashion, at which Lucy, in a girlish fashion, went off to the other extreme, and was obliged to cough and smother her face in her handkerchief to hide the rather nervous merriment which came across her.

"My dear Miss Lucy," he went on, "we are situated very singularly, you and I; and, although we must confess the great advantages, we cannot forget there are also some trials. You are so young, innocent and artless, it is not strange that you do not perceive the obligations entailed upon us by this very position of ours. I hope you will not think it officious in me that I remind you of Miss Arlingcourt's will, and suggest that it is hardly proper for you to encourage any special attentions from the gentleman, who, naturally enough, may desire so dazzling a prize."

Miss Lucy's mirth was suddenly dispersed. Her red lips curled: the shy lids rose from the clear, steady glance of the indignant eyes.

"Sir?" said she.

"I speak from the sincerest of motives, my dear Miss Lucy; I am afraid Lieutenant Kirkwood really believes that you have given him encouragement."

"What harm is there in that, sir?" asked Lucy, with more spirit than Reynold Raleigh had given her credit for.

"But my dear Miss Lucy—you know you are not at liberty to marry."

"What hinders me, Mr. Raleigh? Who has the right to say I shall not?"

"You know about Miss Arlingcourt's will: when you accepted the property you pledged yourself to remain single."

"I do not understand it so. I should like to see the will: but I am very confident there is no such pledge implied. When I do marry I forfeit the right to remain here, and one half of the income of the property. It is the same with you, is it not? You were not married when you took possession, and if you do marry you lose your inheritance; but did you agree that you should never marry?"

"I certainly understood it so; and I think your father so interprets the very act of taking possession here. However, I do not wish to displease you, Miss Lucy. As I said before, I only spoke from friendly motives. I did not wish your fair name to be asspersed with wicked imputations of wilful coquetry. And I was afraid this young Kirkwood was taking too much encouragement, and only wished to give you warning. I cannot but believe, when you reflect upon the subject, that you will see that I am right. You will not certainly be so inconsiderate as to relinquish your proud position here, for the humble situation to which this dependant soldier must take his wife. You will not forego this beautiful home, unless a husband comes who can give you one as fair and worthy. That would be absurd and ridiculous in either of us."

"And you deem a happy home, a tender, heart-requiring love, nothing?" asked Lucy, her wide innocent eyes, full upon his face.

There went a swift passion across it lighting up the eyes, setting the lips trembling.

"No no. Heaven knows I do not. It is stinging and cutting into my heart every day with a deepening smart that such is put away from me?—unless, unless—Oh, Lucy, for your sake I should relinquish all—for your dear sake I could bear a life of toil and struggle—could find blissful content in moderate competency. If—if there were hope for me, would you marry me, Lucy?"

"Marry you!" echoed Lucy, the pretty colour flushing into her cheek, then dying off, and leaving it unusually pale. "What! the very thing you have just been warning me against, Mr. Raleigh? Ah, in that case I should not even have a justifiable excuse. I do not love you, Mr. Raleigh."



"But I might teach you. Oh, child, you do not guess with what untiring devotion I would strive to make your happiness. You do not know the fathomless depths of a heart like mine."

His burly form fairly shook with the sudden emotion which had conquered him.

Lucy Calderwood shrank away, and said quickly, almost angrily:

"Mr. Raleigh, there is but one who has won my love—who will ever win it, and that is not you."

The earnest face blackened into fierce vindictive anger.

"And that one," he said hoarsely; "do you mean to say that one is this poverty-stricken soldier, this silly stripling, Lieutenant Kirkwood?"

"I should not choose to answer a question you have no right to ask," returned Lucy, flaming up again in her generous indignation for the loved one's sake: "but for your unworthy slander. I have yet to learn that Rolf Kirkwood is either silly or poverty-stricken. For my own part I call it an honorable independence to be able to provide for his own wants; to be no hanger-on upon someone else's bounty, like you and I, Mr. Raleigh."

A change had again crossed his face. Of all her sentences he seemed to catch but one word.

"Rolf, Rolf!" repeated he, the name seeming to have some magnetism in it. "Rolf Kirkwood. I did not know that was his name; are you sure?"

"It is his name," replied Lucy, coldly.

"I must look into it," muttered the gentleman, uneasily, and he walked a little away from her and stood looking forth from the window. A few broken words escaped him, but she caught only the repetitions:

"Retribution, retribution."

"Well," said Lucy, still angrily and indignantly, "I suppose I may go now. You have nothing more to say."

Upon which he threw off his abstracted mood, and came back and stood over her, looking down upon her with a strange blending of love and rage.

"And you love him, Lucy; you love this Rolf Kirkwood, and count it nothing to relinquish Miss Arlingcourt's rich bequest for his sake?"

"You are right, sir."

"Poor child! poor child!"

"Why do you say that?" asked Lucy, more vexed than if he had spoken wrathfully.

"Because you will never marry him."

"How do you know that?" she exclaimed, vehemently. "How dare you say it so positively?"

"Because I know your father, and he will never allow it, Miss Lucy," answered Reynold Raleigh, for the first time appearing naturally in his old manner. And he went to the door, opened it for her, and bowed and smiled as she passed through.

"You know you have my best wishes, Miss Lucy. Good morning."

But when she was gone, and the door was closed, he struck his hands together, with a fierce smile on his angry lips.

"There is business in store for me," he muttered. "If I mistake not, Noel Calderwood has been dipping largely into the stocks of our wholesale firms, as well as venturing a few private speculations. It will go hard with me if I cannot get some of his paper into my hands, and enough to make him tremble. Little Miss Lucy is learning independence very fast, but I do not think she is able to brave her father's ruin. There is work for me to-day. The romantic young lady shall not throw herself away on this stripling soldier, Rolf Kirkwood! That is strange—passing strange! I am almost afraid it is something more than a coincidence. I wish I was on better terms with Barbara; she would ferret it out for me. However, Skinner at the village will look after matters for me. I'll set him to hunting over the worthy apothecary's affairs beside.

"It is something marvellous what power that girl has obtained. Love is a cold word for the fierce passion which consumes me. Ah, if I had met such an one in her innocent youth, when I was young. Bah! I am getting weak. I really think I should fling away this comfortable position of mine with a boy's alacrity and delight if only that girl would give me one of her loving smiles, and lean against my shoulder, and call me by the tender names these old-fashioned wives find for their husbands. It would be a new world for me. Heigh ho! What does it count after all. These grand rooms, fine carriages, and smiling guests, luxurious viands and maddening wines bring no lasting satisfaction after all. There is a cottager down in the valley, whom I have watched and envied. It is a pure satisfaction, genuine content, which beams so brightly in his eye and smile. I saw his wife, with her baby in her arms, run out to meet him one night when I was passing, and he put his arms around them both, and there was the same look on the three faces; and though I sneered at this humble exhibition of love in a cottage, it stabbed home to my heart, and showed

me my own life to be a poor, farce, a wretched desert. Ah! if this girl would only listen to me it might not be too late."

He paused and looked around shiveringly.

"I did not know," he muttered, slowly, "that it was so terrible a thing to hunger and thirst in this way for another person's presence and love."

And then, with another shiver, he added:

"Poor Miss Arlingcourt! I understand now why she could never be bright or happy. Poor Miss Arlingcourt! Can it be that Barbara's horrible suggestion is a true one? Is this retribution coming upon us both?"

And as if this thought stung him beyond endurance, he seized his hat, and went off into the garden, walking to and fro along the paths there. But at the breakfast table he was cheerful again, and the sight of Lieutenant Kirkwood's loving smile, and Lucy's answering blush, set all his thoughts once more to wicked plans.

He gave his guests notice that a little business called him to the next town, and drove away when breakfast was over, and as we have seen, on the roadside passed Farmer Moss's little children and the Scotswoman in the bushes.

## CHAPTER XII.

MADGE RAMSAY proved an admirable housekeeper for the old sexton; and when Elspeth was able to go away to a married sister in the next county, Peleg made no secret of his willingness for her to remain there.

"It's too hard work for you, Elspeth," said he. "I shouldn't be happy again in seeing you digging over the work here. You've worked enough in your day to take your rest now. I'll come over and see you now and then. Madge takes excellent care of me, you know."

Old Elspeth smothered her secret indignation, and took a friendly leave, but under her breath she muttered, resentfully:

"Oh yes! oh yes! It's all very fine now. This young woman turns off the old; that's the way the world over! It's Madge this, and Madge that; and poor old Elspeth is sent off to die. May be you'd better wait, Peleg Moss, until you have numbered and wintered this black-eyed Scotswoman. It's queer looks and notions I saw when I was ill. What was she muttering so wild for one night? And why did she lean out of the window, and shake her fist at Arlingcourt Miss? And who was she cursing so bitterly this very day? Ho! ho! Peleg Moss, there is more than you think for in your smart Scotch housekeeper. Old Elspeth is not got so far gone that she has lost her wits."

Nevertheless, Peleg and Madge continued to suit each other. The latter had a quiet, preoccupied way with her; she went about her household duties in a calm fashion, which, while he hardly realized what it was, was inexpressibly refreshing to the old sexton, so used to Elspeth's garrulity, and crowing over her tasks.

The two, moreover, soon found a closer chord of sympathy. Madge was clearing away the dinner dishes one day, and Peleg with the boy on his knee, was dozing away in the arm-chair, when a gentleman in a glossy hat, and broad-cloth coat, passed the window.

Madge dropped the tray she held, with a low cry, and clasped both hands over her heart. Peleg likewise started up, looked around him wildly, and then dropped back into his chair, pale, and trembling.

It was only a stranger stopping to inquire the way to the neighbouring curate.

"You thought it was someone you knew," said Madge, presently, recovering from her own agitation, and perceiving the start it had given the old man.

"Yes," answered Peleg, with a sigh, "I thought it was someone—someone whose coming frightens me, and yet which I am looking and longing for."

Madge lifted her wild, bright eyes, and for the first time examined his face curiously.

"Why do you look at me in that way, Madge?" asked he, in turn roused to interest.

"Because it was strange we should have had the same feeling," she returned, gravely, and then turned back to her work.

She took a great deal of pains to drop as much of her Scotch dialect as possible, and it was only under strong excitement that she returned to it.

Peleg, with the boy's hand nestled in his, watched her a few moments, and then took a sudden resolution.

"I have a mind to tell you about it," said he. "You're not a babbling woman, Madge, and you seemed interested the other night in the Arlingcourt history. There is something which weighs on my mind, and I have not told it to anybody. I know I can trust it with you, Madge."

"Dinna fear o' that, sir! The grave itself is not more close over its secrets than I can be. I have learned o' dear experience."

"I can tell that, Madge. I know a chattering woman by her eye," returned Peleg, and he straightway unfolded the heavy secret of the Arlingcourt vault; told her of the empty coffin of the last of its proud line.

The woman had brought her tray of dishes to the able, noiselessly dipped them into the pan of scalding water, and wiped them while she listened.

She passed her hand thoughtfully over her forehead at the conclusion of his recital.

"It is a strange and uncanny story," she said.

"What can have become of the poor lady's corpse?"

"It is more than I can think," answered Peleg: "I have puzzled, and puzzled, until my head grew dizzy, and found out nothing. Every strange gentleman I see, my heart comes thumping into my mouth. I only know that I am pretty sure to find it out one time or another, for something tells me I shall know it before I die. It is queer what notions get into one's head; but I make as sure as if she had come from the grave and told me, that Miss Arlingcourt was willing he should take her; that she loved him as he loved her."

"And she did not love this man who is now, this Reynold Raleigh?" asked Madge, sharply. "Why did she leave him this money, and the right to be master there?"

The old sexton shook his gray head.

"It is a riddle, a riddle. I somehow think it is all I am left alive for to be finding it out. Old Silas Scott has a queer way of talking to them he can trust. He got it from Belinda, his sister, who took care of Miss Arlingcourt from a very baby. Them two worshipped the very ground Miss Cornelia trod upon, and Belinda was with her to the last. And Belinda says she saw Miss Arlingcourt go to a window, her eyes flashing with a strange light, and her lips curling in an awful way, and she stood looking down upon Mr. Raleigh, who was below in the court-yard, and she says she can swear to the words, her lady murmured, as she looked down with that strange smile."

"Yes, Reynold Raleigh, you shall have your wish; but it shall be the wisest desire you have ever cherished. You shall have your wish, and I shall have my revenge!"

"That was what she heard her say, and she declares there was no love, but bitter hatred, on Miss Arlingcourt's side, for some wrong or other which she had discovered just before she made that will which puzzled every one so much."

"Do your people about here know what has been the man's past life?" Has he a black heart or a pure one?"

"None can tell. The gentry like him; I cannot say as much for the tenantry."

"You have opened your heart to the pair, Scots-woman. She also will show you what is hiding in hers," said Madge Ramsay.

And she put away her dishes, took the boy into her lap, and hugging him closely to her breast, with those wild, feverish eyes fixed upon his face, told the sexton a brief, but sad, and to him, marvellous story.

He came toward her when it was finished, with his rough hand outstretched to hers.

"My poor woman. Heaven must have sent you here to help unravel the snarl. You may rely upon me for your friend. You shall have what help you need. I know an honest lawyer—heaven be praised that it is possible—and he shall take your case in hand."

"But I cannot move yet. I must bide a little longer, and see what will come."

"Well, we will both watch and wait. You mean to watch him, I suppose."

"I have little wit, an' my head gangs round and round when I try to see the best way. But I mane giv' him a chance to do right. I mane giv' him a chance. I will find a way to see him, to let him ken I am flesh and blood still, and maybe, heaven only kens, maybe his heart will be moved."

"But you say you have the proofs; you must keep good watch over them, for your whole case depends on them. I know enough of the law, for that."

"I ha'e them safe; for the bairn's sake I take care o' that," responded the Scots-woman, giving the boy a silent hug; then, putting him down, she went solemnly about her work.

The old sexton from that time held her in the most friendly regard. The mutual confidence, as well as the earnest sympathy, knit between them a bond which lasted through their lives. He grew also extremely fond of the boy, and took him, with him on all his rambles, and to much of his labour in the churchyard. To the latter place the pair was pretty sure to drift, whether there was any special call or



not. It grew upon Peleg, until it was almost a monomania, to expect the appearance of the stranger, with an explanation, if not a return to the coffin of its silent occupant; and he would go down to the vault and sit down on the stone steps, and watch and wait, or doze dreamily, while the boy played up above in the sunshine, running down now and then to tell him some bit of childish gossip, or to ask an explanation of some strange phenomenon, his bright little eyes had discovered in the animal or vegetable kingdom which outspread so widely, and, to his eager heart, grandly before him.

One day a partial realisation of his vague expectations came to him. He had been adding a child's grave in a corner of the churchyard, and had worked on until the sun was almost down. Little Malcolm, Madge Ramsay's boy, who had been prattling around him, playing to-peep with the carved angels on the tombstones around, and following with his dimpled finger the ghostly skulls carved on the older stones, gave a sigh of satisfaction when he saw the spade and trowel shouldered.

"Now we maun gang to mither?" lisped he, in his pretty, baby voice, which sounded still more musical for the strange dialect, "now we shall gang hame."

Peleg took the warm little hand in his, and marched off towards the rear gate and the home path.

"Are you so tired, little man?" he said, good-naturedly, "so tired of Uncle Peleg?"

"Nay," responded the little fellow, holding up his rosy mouth for a kiss. "Malcolm loves Uncle Peleg, but we've been lang from mither, and the dark is coming."

"The dark?" repeated Peleg, laughing, and then sobered down suddenly. "I haven't been around the church to-day, not once; nor by the door to the vaults. I can't let the night come without that. Mallie, little man, I'll put you in the path, and do you run home to mither, and tell her I'm coming soon."

And when he had put the child over the gate and sent him scampering towards home, Peleg turned back and went round towards the western corner of the church, which was bathed in a golden glow, but fast purpling into dimness.

The old man sighed heavily as he drew forth the ponderous key and thrust it into the lock. Even to that very day he was unable to satisfy his uneasy conscience, and decide whether he had done wrong or right in allowing the stranger entrance to the silence of those vaulted rooms, in which the Arlingcourts had taken their sleep for so many generations. His disquietude had, as I have said before, become a morbid passion. It would not do to let a day pass without he came again to look at the empty coffin. He turned the key, opened the creaking door, and went slowly down the steps, stumbling a little, for coming from the flood of sunset glare, it was as dark as the approaching night in the gloomy aisle before him.

He went up to the coffin and lifted the lid, which he kept unscrewed, in the same wild suspicion that sometime or other the rifled treasure would be returned to mingle its dust among its kindred. He lifted the polished wood, on which the silver plate shone like a band of moonlight, and sighed again.

"Empty!—still empty! What would they think of me if they knew Peleg Moss had betrayed his trust? Sometimes I tremble lest the old Arlingcourts should come out of their coffins to haunt me. If I only knew Miss Cornelia herself was contented I should not mind; but it is terrible to think the spirit is kept disquieted by what is done to its mouldering body, and they do say such things can be. Alack a day! if I only had power to know what Miss Cornelia thinks!"

There came a low, soft breath, the distant echo of his sigh, between the black space where the door into the old vault was half ajar, and the outer air, whose purity and brightness stole, like all such heavenly blessings, in golden silence through the damp and dark.

Peleg Moss turned, and his old knees knocked together at the sight before him. He did not question what it was; he never gave a thought of doubt, or scepticism.

It was Miss Arlingcourt—Cornelia Arlingcourt; her wraith, which had come to answer his yearning prayer.

The old sexton clasped his hard hands, and bent his knee in humble reverence, even while his eyes still clung to her face in thankful joy. An angel's face? To be sure. Did he not see how every worn look, every defacing line, all the old sadness, had been smoothed away. The little light which shone upon it radiated a halo round the luminous eyes, the calm sweetness of the lips. Some sort of flowing white fell down, in just such waves as he had seen in the pictures of the saints in the town cathedral, around the stately form. His loyal heart, true as subject to its monarch, rose up joyfully out of its mourning.

"You are happy now, Miss Cornelia," he cried. "I shall no longer mourn for the last Arlingcourt. You know everything now; and see that I was sorely tempted by my compassion into admitting the stranger here. It does not distress your spirit that your body has been stolen from beside your kindred. You have come to relieve poor old Peleg's remorse and distress."

"Be at peace," said the vision's soft, low voice. "Distress yourself no longer, good Peleg."

"It is all well; tell me it is all well?" persisted Peleg, in an ecstasy of delight at this marvellous experience vouchsafed to him.

"It is all well," pronounced the vision, and seemed to glide backward, or fade away, he could not tell which; but when he brushed away the mist which hung over his sight he was alone.

### CHAPTER XIII.

MR. RALEIGH returned from town in such a marked state of exhilaration, that the dullest of the guests noticed it, and wondered what new streak of good luck had happened to one, whose pathway seemed already showered with favours. It gave an inkling of the state of things, when Noel Calderwood came posting up the avenue in a chaise and pair, and whisked in upon them like a sea-breeze.

First one and then another learned that a wonderfully prolific coal-mine had been discovered in some waste pastures in Wales, which would give to the Arlingcourt property an additional income of many thousand pounds. The heirs were not likely, now, to remain simply the great people of the little township. They were people of consequence, not alone for the shire, but for London.

Mr. Calderwood sought his daughter, and while his searching eyes fixed inexorably upon every shifting expression of her face, began desecrating upon the brilliant opening before her.

"You need not stint yourself in diamonds now," he said, gaily, "your presentation at court is a settled thing, and it will be your own fault if you are outshone by anyone there. This is a most magnificent discovery."

Lucy bit her red lip, nervously.

"But I am not sure it will benefit me so much, dear papa," she returned. "I do not know that I shall have any right to take any of this money."

"Any right! what do you mean? Does not the will give to you one half of all the income of the Arlingcourt property? Of course you have it, and you can use it as you please. I have consulted a lawyer about it; you can dispose of this income as you please. Lu Calderwood, you will be the envy of your sex."

"But, father," continued pretty Lucy, dropping her white eyelids till her silky fringe kissed the rosy flush creeping over her cheeks; "wealth does not insure happiness. I am so young, and there may be such a long life before me."

"Well, what of that?" There was an added sharpness, an asperity in the tone, which a little time back would have driven all the girl's self-possession out of her mind. But Lucy determined to be valiant.

"I do not think Miss Arlingcourt herself was happy. I think, indeed, with all her money, she was very miserable. I should be sorry to believe I should have such a dreary look in my eyes when I came to her age."

"Of course you will not; if you are a sensible woman you will make yourself a brilliant position, and enjoy it; not shut yourself up, and grow moody and misanthropical, as Miss Arlingcourt did. She was a very strange person."

"I always fancied she had met some secret trouble. She was so alone in the world; how could she help being dull and sad? Indeed, indeed, father, I am growing to be quite afraid of Miss Arlingcourt's fortune. It does not look so desirable as it used to do."

Noel Calderwood snapped his fingers impatiently, and eyed her with a fiery glare in his eyes, but he would not help her out with the confession; so, at last, she was forced, by sheer desperation, to bring it in abruptly.

"Lieutenant Kirkwood has asked me to marry him, papa."

"Lieutenant Popinjay!" exclaimed the whilom apothecary. "I didn't suppose he had any more sense! He would have known it was impossible if he had possessed a child's wit; but he is a downright simpleton. I believe these soldiers think a bit of gold lace and a scarlet coat make up for lack of brain and fortune both. I hope you showed him a due appreciation of his folly—the mercenary idiot!"

Lucy's eyelids rose promptly now, and an angry flash shot over the blue iris.

"You cannot hardly call it mercenary, sir, since he knows that the very call of my accepting his suit will

deprive me of the fortune your insinuations would make the object of attraction."

"Your accepting his suit!" vociferated the angry father. "Lucy Calderwood, you do not tell me that you have been so mad, ridiculous, preposterous!"

Lucy's colour rose still higher, and she repressed a little sobbing tremor from her voice as she answered, falteringly:

"I do not say that it is quite settled, but I gave him to understand that—I loved him, and I am sure, father, I shall be happier as his wife than living here like a queen, in poor Miss Arlingcourt's lonely way."

"I should think you had taken leave of your senses, you ridiculous girl! You shall not be guilty of any such madness. If you have no consideration for yourself, you might at least have some thought for me. Throw away from you in this unexampled way such a magnificent fortune! Go to beggary and starvation! No, indeed, miss, I shall not allow any such vagary. You may just dismiss the idea from your mind. I say I shall not allow it. Just now, too, when so brilliant a prospect lies before you."

He got up, and walked to and fro, now and then pausing to give her an angry gesture, and still more ireful glance.

Lucy's pretty colour had faded into paleness, but her eyes had grown steady, and her lips had lost their tremor, and were pressed together firmly.

"But, father, is it really for you to say? It is my fortune to lose, my happiness which is lost or gained."

"You have, indeed, taken leave of your senses," exclaimed Noel Calderwood, with one of his blackest frowns. "Where have you learned that it is proper for a daughter to defy her father to his very face? and have my bitterest curse you must, if you leave Arlingcourt Rise, and listen to this beggarly soldier's proposal."

"But father—" began Lucy.

"Don't call me 'father' while behaving in this undutiful fashion. Lucy Calderwood, I am ashamed of you! I will not listen to such talk!"

He darted to the door, and closed it after him, with a jar which shook the whole corridor.

Lucy dropped her head to the hands clasped tightly on the table, and shed a few natural tears; but presently it was lifted haughtily.

"I shall not wreck my own happiness, and Rolf's beside, to gratify his pride and avarice. No; not even if he be my father," she murmured. "If it affected his welfare or his honour it would be different."

And she went among the guests with a grave but composed countenance. Miss West came fluttering up to her, something like an hour afterwards, and motioned her into a little curtained recess.

Something in the feverish glare of the hollow eyes, in the wild way which had become so common with the wretched woman, made Lucy shrink back a little, though she spoke pleasantly.

"Do you wish to speak with me, Miss West?"

"What are they plotting now?" was her abrupt rejoinder; "why are your father and Reynold Raleigh so angry with you?"

Lucy hung her head. She had never liked Miss West; perhaps because, with a woman's quick intuition, she had seen and known the other's animosity. She was not going to make such a woman her confidant in such a secret.

"You are afraid of me," sneered Barbara. "Little simpleton! I can do you good service, though it is not so much for love of you as hatred of another. Tell me what you have done to anger them."

"You had best ask them," replied Lucy. "It is scarcely a matter for gossip."

Barbara's eyes flashed.

"Do you think I am blind? Can I not tell a pair of lovers? But you are right; choose love before wealth; and fly, fly, from Miss Arlingcourt's gold. It has a curse!"

Lucy shuddered at her fierce looks, and slipped away; only, however, to meet Rolf Kirkwood, with a face of deadly pallor, crossing the hall with rapid strides.

He came to her side hastily.

"Lucy—Miss Calderwood," he cried, in agitated tones. "I have indeed been rudely awakened from my beautiful hopes, cruelly punished for my presumption."

"You have seen my father," faltered Lucy.

"I have. Heaven knows I do not deserve all his anger—I am not guilty of the mercenary object of which he accuses me. But I must take my leave of you at once. I must quit this place immediately."

Lucy stood for a moment, overwhelmed with bewildering agitation, and unable to think what was right and proper for her to say or do.

"Humiliating and distressing as this hasty leaving must be, I cannot wish that I had never come," pursued the young man, "for there are some remembrances that will be as precious as my life. Oh, Lucy, Lucy, if this terrible fortune did not rise between us."

The anguish in his look and voice broke down Lucy's reserve.

"It shall not stand between us, Rolf," she answered, indignantly. "I have a word to say about it myself. Do you think I will sacrifice my lifelong happiness to live in grandeur?"

His face flushed with a joyful glimmering of hope, though he said, sadly.

"Ah! but how can I consent to such a sacrifice on your part? If I should not be able to provide for you the same luxuries, would not my conscience continually reproach me?"

"Not if I am happier without the luxuries with—your love," answered Lucy, dropping her eyes in modest shyness.

"And could you be?"

"I could."

One voice trembled with the suspense, and the ecstasy of hope and joy; the other was calm and low, but steady.

"Now may heaven bless you!" exclaimed the lieutenant, fervently.

There was a stir on the other side of the door beyond; and the pair became aware of the unsuitableness of the place for such an interview.

"Understand me," said Lucy, hurriedly. "I do not wish to be undutiful; but I cannot consent to ruin my own happiness. In a little time longer I shall be legally free from my father's control, and it will do no harm to either of us to give our hearts the test of time, since we are both so young. But for this fortune—I count it nothing, in comparison with the love and tenderness of a faithful heart."

She half extended her hand, Rolf Kirkwood caught it in both his, and held it a moment, while he answered, fervently:

"You are an angel of goodness! and with this gracious assurance from you, nothing they can say shall daunt or dishearten me."

The opening of the door beyond caused them to start aside, but not before both Noel Calderwood and Reynold Raleigh had had a glimpse of the pair, and read the story of the expressive attitude.

The latter retreated, but Noel, with a face black with frowns, darted forward, and drew his daughter rudely away.

"Come with me, Lucy Calderwood; I have something to say to you," added he, and almost thrust her into the ante-room.

Rolf Kirkwood's face flushed angrily, and all his soldier blood rushed hotly through his veins; but the deprecating gesture of Lucy's white hand had more power than her father's fiercest threats. He only bowed, and went hastily out of the house.

Noel Calderwood was fairly livid with rage, and it seemed to her, quaking with terror also.

"Shameless, ungrateful child!" he ejaculated; "you will be the ruin of me; my ruin for ever!"

"Father, this is as unbecoming in you, as insulting to me," returned Lucy, roused to resent the rude treatment. "What ruin can come to you? You are already in a better position than you have ever been before, owing to the help I have given you from the income bequeathed only to me."

"Better position!" groaned Noel. "I tell you I am ruined! Lucy, if you persist in engaging yourself to that Kirkwood, I am not only ruined in my business, but my character will be gone—worse yet, I shall be sent to prison!"

"To prison!" echoed Lucy, her very lips blanching. "What can you mean, father?"

"Mr. Raleigh has been talking to me, just now," began Noel, looking ashamed and discomfited now, rather than angry and indignant, "and he says you must not forfeit your claim here."

"What has Mr. Raleigh to do with the matter?" demanded Lucy, quickly. "I will have none of his advice. He is welcome to the fortune I forfeit, but I do not require his advice."

"Would to heaven he had nothing to do with it," exclaimed Noel. "I think the man has the gift of sorcery. He has ferreted out things I believed hidden from everybody. I am in his power, completely in his power. He can send me to prison to-morrow as a felon, if he chooses, and he will choose; oh! Lucy, he has but one price, and that is for you to dismiss this Kirkwood, and continue to live here at Arlingcourt Rise."

"Is this a trick to win my compliance to your wishes?" asked Lucy, with quivering lips. "Oh, father, father, you cannot be so lost to honour and affection as to wilfully cheat me in this way!"

"No, no; it is true, every word of it! I will swear it on my knees! I have only just found it out, and you can see how it has unnerved me. He has bought up my notes, and without your help I am ruined in my business. But that is nothing—nothing in comparison with the rest. You see I was hard pressed and distracted, and in an evil hour I copied your signature and his—you know I meant to replace the money and make it right—but they have an ugly name

for it and can punish me. And he has found it out just now of all times, when this new income would have enabled you to set me all right, without a particle of inconvenience to yourself."

"You did what? I don't understand," asked poor bewildered Lucy.

"I raised a little money by your signature and his. I did not mean any harm; but I was pressed by creditors, and I heard of this new thing, and felt sure of making it right before it was found out."

"You mean that you can be punished."

"For forging? yes," answered Noel, with a little renewal of his fierceness. "I believe you have no feeling at all for your father. You will see me carried off to jail, and be getting ready your wedding finery."

Lucy put her hands over her face and gave a little moan. She saw the whole direful position now, and it swept away her fortitude, to look upon the sweet hopes going to wreck under such an avalanche of evil.

"I should like to see Mr. Raleigh," said she, presently. "I should like to know from his own lips just what he requires."

"Nothing, now, beyond your giving up this absurd idea of marrying young Kirkwood," answered her father, eagerly. "You know I was indignant at the idea, before I knew about this danger to myself. It is very little, I am sure, Lucy."

"Very little," echoed poor Lucy, dismally, "very little for me to go through life with a lonely aching heart—to miss the beauty and glory of other women's lives! Oh, father, have you really no more compassion for me?"

"But, Lucy, I have not told you all. He hinted something more. This new income will make such a difference. You can both lay by from it a little fortune in a few years. You see the will reads in such a way that all the yearly income must be divided between you, no matter how much it is, and you can use it as you please."

"Well, do you mean that I may marry Rolf after these few years are over?"

"No, not Rolf Kirkwood certainly. But you can marry someone else. Child, don't you see that this Raleigh is madly in love with you himself? It is that which has moved him so in the matter. He means to save enough to marry you himself, by-and-by, and let this place go to the hospital, as the will gives it finally."

"I would not marry him to save myself from starvation. Do you ask it of me?" she cried, piteously.

"No, no, nothing is asked now, only that you receive no suitors, and remain here, the co-heir. I am sure it is not so much to ask, after all."

"Not much! It was to give the beauty from the world, the sunshine from the sky, the dew from her youth. Not much!"

Lucy clasped her hands, grown cold, leaned wearily against the chair, and said:

"You must bring me the proofs of all this, and then I shall ask time to think about it seriously."

"You won't send your father to prison, Lucy! you won't do that?" whined Noel Calderwood. "Do you need time to think of that?"

"No, I can't do that, I can't do that," sighed Lucy. "Send in Mr. Raleigh now."

And Reynold Raleigh came, and half-an-hour afterwards Lucy, pale and drooping, like a blasted lily, crept out, away up-stairs to her chamber, and he remained, pacing to and fro, rubbing his hands gleefully, and muttering:

"I shall have them both; the fortune I cannot do without, and the girl, for whom I would lose the fortune and the whole world beside."

An eerie, mocking laugh startled him, and before he could detain her, a closet door opened, and Barbara West rushed out and flitted away. She left a stinging arrow behind, when she exclaimed:

"Cheat yourself! cheat yourself, while you may, Reynold; but I tell you Miss Arlingcourt's ghost has almost done with me, and your turn will come."

"Her ghost! the ghost of a woman in her grave," sneered Reynold Raleigh; but he glanced around him, shudderingly.

(To be continued.)

DR. CUMMING AGAIN PROPHECYING.—Dr. Cumming has appeared once more before his countrymen in his familiar character of a far-seeing prophet. He believes that in our day is the prediction fulfilled that "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places." In these days we are probably about as free from war, pestilence, and famine, or from the risk of any of them, as mankind, on an average, have been in any age of the world; and we are unable to see that the Peruvian earthquake greatly helps the case of the seer of Crowa-court. Dr. Cumming, however, is

nothing if not a prophet; and he has made up his mind that we are on the eve of "the most terrific and destructive" war in which the human race has ever taken part. England is to be "deeply chastened for her sins," but after all she will "emerge from the trial, purified as fine gold," and it is cheering to learn upon such authority that "her sun will not set until it mingles with that sun which will have no western declension." He farther tells us that "about this time" the "prophetic chronology" expires—a circumstance at which some profane persons may be inclined to rejoice—on this, if on no other account, that it ought to extinguish Dr. Cumming. The effect of these prophetic utterances is somewhat marred by the manner in which the oracle winds up. "In conclusion," says the reporter, "he explained the objects of the Protestant Reformation Society, for which a collection was to be made at the end of the lecture; and he promised, if the contributions were liberal, to give another address, if well, next year."

#### EARTHQUAKES IN ENGLAND.

At a time when the question of an earthquake in England and Ireland is being discussed, it may be interesting to your readers to learn that shocks of some severity were no unusual event some centuries ago in this country. In 974 Wendover tells us that a great earthquake shook all England. In 1081 one occurred, which was attended "with heavy bellowing." In 1089 there was "a mickle earth-stirring over all England," says the *Saxon Chronicle*, and the annalist notices that the harvest was especially backward. "In 1110," says Florence of Worcester, "there was a very great earthquake at Shrewsbury. The river Trent was dried up at Nottingham from morning to the third hour of the day, so that men walked dryshod through its channel." In 1183 there was a great earthquake in many parts of England. "In 1165," says Matthew Paris, "there was an earthquake in Ely, Norfolk, and Suffolk, so that it threw down men who were standing, and rang the bells." The same writer records another in 1187, when many buildings were thrown down; and another in 1247, which he speaks of as especially violent on the banks of the Thames, where it shook down many buildings. One feature of it was that some days afterwards the sea became preternaturally calm, as if the tides had ceased, and remained so for three months. Next year the western parts of England were the great sufferers. In the diocese of Bath, wide rents opened in the walls, and a cupola on the tower of Wells Cathedral was dashed down upon the roof. At St. David's great damage was done to the cathedral. Two years later a shock was felt in Buckinghamshire, which caused more panic than injury, the accompanying sound being like thunder underground. It was noticed that the birds were driven wild with fear. "In 1275," says Matthew of Westminster, "there was a general earthquake, by the violence of which the church of St. Michael of the Hill, outside Glastonbury, fell down, levelled with the soil." Many other English churches suffered in a less degree. From this time earthquakes seem to have been less common; but in 1382 there was one which shook down some churches in Kent, and which a poet of the time has described rather vividly. Three years later there were two shocks, but they seem to have been very slight, as Walsingham only interprets the first to mean an expedition against Scotland, and the second a vain excitement in the political world. But there are legends which ascribe the destruction of whole cities or armies to convulsions of this kind. Camden records that the town of Conchester was destroyed by an earthquake. The *Chronicle of Evesham* says the same of Alcester, but as the visitation in this case was a special judgment on the smiths of the town, who drowned St. Egwin's preaching with the noise of their hammers, there is reason to hope that it was a purely local affliction. Reginald of Durham, says that at Mungedene-hill, near Northam-on-Tweed, the earth opened and swallowed up many thousand Scots who were then ravaging St. Cuthbert's lands. These traditions may, perhaps, be taken to show that the popular fancy in England recognized earthquakes as occasions of violent change. Of course, we do not pretend that our list is exhaustive even for the 12th and 13th centuries, nor have we touched upon such geological theories as Mr. Geikie's, that there has been a great upheaval of Scotland about the Antoine wall, or a great recession of the sea since Roman times.

In 1580 there was but one medical man in Brighton, a certain Dr. Mathews, who lived in Middle-street. His fee for attending cases of confinement in the town was 2s. 6d., and for cases in the neighbourhood from 3s. to 5s. There are now in Brighton, no less than ninety-seven "medical practitioners," according to the Directory for 1883.





[THE JUGGLER VISITS THE PRISONER.]

## YU-LU.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ANOTHER hour passed, yet no pursuers were seen and Paul almost began to hope that there might have been some mistake.

"Yu-lu," he said, "are you sure that it was Li whom you saw at the inn this morning?"

"Of course I am," the maiden replied. "There is no mistaking him."

"I feared we should have been followed ere this, if such had been the case."

"It was surely Li," Yu-lu replied. "But," she added, with a sudden beam of hope, "perhaps he did not, after all, entertain any suspicions concerning you."

"Perhaps not," added Paul. "And yet," he continued in a thoughtful mood, "why should he have sold me the horses? A man in his position would not surely be selling horses about the country. If that were Li he must surely have had some suspicions. The intelligence of our flight could only have come from the woman Lan, and of course the pursuers would have a description of my person. They must be after us ere this, but have probably taken the wrong track."

Just as Paul ceased speaking, a sharp cry broke from Yu-lu, and with a trembling movement she pointed towards the canal. The youth looked back and saw two horsemen upon the bridge he had crossed. They were at least five miles distant, and though they seemed but mere moving specks, yet there was no doubt that they were horsemen. Paul knew that himself and companion could not be seen at that distance, and there was yet time for concealment. At the distance of less than a quarter of a mile, and standing some rods from the road, there was a peasant's cot. It was the only place in view that could possibly be reached in season, for the equestrians were surely on the road they were travelling, and towards that cot they started. When they reached it, they found no one there but an old woman, who informed them that her husband and son, the only other occupants, were at a distant garden by the canal, at work in a tea-patch.

Paul had no time for extended consideration, and he knew that the woman would be governed more rigidly by gratitude, than by any fear that could be forced upon her.

"My good woman," he said, speaking frankly and quickly, "we are two unfortunate people, who have had the misfortune to be persecuted because we

helped to rescue a poor girl from the hands of a villain. We are even now pursued. Give us shelter, and save us from the men who would capture us, and your reward shall be ample. We will give you gold—four pieces of bright, pure gold."

The woman's eyes sparkled, and she put forth her shrivelled hand. Paul valued not the gold, but he would be sure of the woman's meaning before he gave it to her.

"Will you conceal us?" he asked.

"Yes," the woman replied.

"And if our enemies should come and inquire for us, what would you tell them?"

"That would depend upon what kind of men they were, and how they should ask. For four golden pieces I can afford to tell a lie, for then I can pay for Buddha's pardon."

Paul was satisfied that the woman meant to do the best she could, and without farther questioning he asked her to lead the way to a place of concealment. She thought for a few moments, then she went to a place in the floor where there was a joint in the rough boards, and raised a small trap-door.

"Here," she said, "is a small cellar which we use for keeping tallow in. As soon as you are down I will pull an old reed mat over the place, and they will never find it, for I don't know of another such place about here."

There was a rough ladder which led down to the bottom of the place, and having descended first himself, Paul turned and assisted his companion. The door was then replaced, and our hero heard the mat drawn over. It was utterly dark there, but by no means damp or uncomfortable. Our friends found a place to sit down, and ere long they heard the sound of horses' hoofs in the yard. Soon there came the tramp of feet upon the floor overhead—the feet of two men, certainly—and Paul and Yu-lu could hear every word plainly. The first speaker was at once recognised as Li.

"Hi, woman," he cried, "have you seen two persons go by here this morning?"

"Yes, I think there have been a number by," returned the woman.

"Ah, who were they?"

"Some folks that work down by the canal."

"But have you seen none go the other way? Haven't you seen two people—a young man and a boy—go the other way?"

"No, sir."

"Nor have not any such called here?"

"Yes. There were two such called here about an hour ago. They stopped and got some water, and then went off towards the great river."

"Toward Kiang-yin?"

"No. They left the road, and crossed the marsh, behind us here, and kept on to the northward. They were in a great hurry."

"They were on foot, were they?"

"Yes, and looked very tired. Poor folks! If you could overtake them and give them a ride 't would be a blessing, for they looked like innocent youths."

"Innocent like snakes!" growled Li.

"But they were not surely, wicked people," said the old woman, with perfect assurance.

"Never mind," said Li. "Right off to the northward, you say?"

"Yes. Across the marsh by the left-hand path. They must be half way to the river by this time. But you are not going yet."

"Yes, my good woman."

"But stop and eat something."

"No."

"I've got some wine."

"We will taste that."

"That's right," said the woman, arising and moving across the floor. "Poor dear youths! They wanted me, if any body came and inquired after them, to detain 'em as long as I could."

"They did, eh?" cried Li. "But never mind. Hasten with your wine, and we'll make up for the lost time."

The wine was soon brought, and quickly drank, and in a few moments more Paul heard the horses gallop away. As soon as the sound died away in the distance, the trap-door was raised, and Paul and his companion came up. He thanked the old woman for the service she had done him, and after paying her the gold he had promised, he asked for some kind of refreshment. This she brought quickly forward, and placed upon a small table where the wine already stood, and Paul and Yu-lu sat down.

"Hi-yah! There are three paths over the marsh, old woman. Which one did —"

The voice stopped short. Paul leaped from his chair, and saw Li standing at the window? Quick as thought he snatched a pistol from his bosom, and raised it, but Li detected the movement and moved out of sight.

"We are lost!" groaned Yu-lu, clinging half-frantically to her lover's bosom.

"Not yet," uttered Paul. "Courage, dearest! Let me have my arms free."

Yu-lu sprang back, for she saw that she was encumbering her lover's arms, and on the next instant the door that led to the entry was seen to open a little. Paul would have darted towards it, but at the same moment there came the sharp report of a

pistol, and the youth felt a sudden pang in his head. It was a sharp, ringing, burning sensation, and while he strained his eyes towards the door a thousand varied lights seemed dancing before him. He staggered forward a few paces, and then he knew that Yu-lu had caught him in her arms.

"Paul, Paul!" she cried. "Speak to me—oh, speak!"

But he could utter no words. He had a dim sense of pain in his head, and a faint, confused idea of soft arms clasping him around. Again he heard the sound of that sweet voice in his ear, and then he knew that he was sinking down upon the floor. Another quick succession of sparkling lights seemed to flash before his eyes, and after that everything was dark and cold.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Paul Ardeen came to himself he was in a very small place, and the light came to him through a grated door. The walls of the room were of wood, and the ceiling and floor were of the same materials. He knew that he was in a prison, and from the din that came rumbling through the air, he concluded that he must be in a large city. His first movement, as soon as he had fully recovered his senses, was to feel his head, for he felt a dull pain there. He found it bandaged, and after considerable reflection and examination he found that he was not seriously injured. He remembered the firing of the pistol through the crack of the door, and the subsequent sensations he had experienced. The ball must have hit his skull just above and behind the temple, and glanced off without penetrating the bone. There must have been considerable contusion, but Paul knew, from the sensations he experienced, that he was in no danger. As soon as his mind was satisfied upon this point he turned his attention to other matters.

At first there came a sort of dream-like vision before him, and, when his mind struggled forth into the reality he remembered the maiden who had been with him during his excited flight. With both hands pressed hard upon his brow he sat back upon the little frame that served him as a bed, and sobbed deeply. Physical weakness had taken away much of his strength of nerve, and his bitter sorrow ran riot in his soul. He thought of Yu-lu—of how she had smiled upon and trusted him—how she had shone like a touch of heaven in his path—and he felt how much he had lost. He remembered—how felt—how mighty was his love for that gentle being—how it had penetrated every avenue of his thoughts and feelings—how it had entered into his very life, and become part of his soul. He thought of all this, and utter wretchedness overwhelmed him like an angry sea. He was sunken in darkness so dense and deep that not even a thought of day came to bless him. If his reflections did at length turn to where hope should have had a home, he thought only of the almost unlimited power of him who had stricken him with the blow.

It might have been half an hour after Paul had fully recovered himself, that he heard footsteps approaching his cell, and ere long an armed soldier stopped in front of the grated door and looked in. He was a greasy-looking fellow, and on his shoulder he carried a gun-like contrivance that might at first sight have been taken for a small iron cannon rusted down to about half its original size, and then set in a stock.

"Hi!" the fellow exclaimed, setting down his heavy piece of ordnance and looking in upon the youth. "So you're up again. What a time you've had."

Paul arose from his couch and approached the door, and the Chinaman made a motion as though he would bring his weapon to a favourable position for shooting.

"Where am I?" was Paul's first question.

"In prison, I think," replied the guard.

"But in what place?"

"Close by the canal of Yang-tchi."

"But am I in Nankin?"

"Yes."

"And how long have I been here?"

"This is the third day," said the fellow, after counting the great yellow buttons upon his vest.

"Has the prince seen me?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what he means to do with me?"

The fellow grinned a sort of grim, dubious grin, and bobbed his head—and that was all the answer he gave. Paul repeated the question, but it was only answered by another bob of the head. A third time he asked the same question, and this time the Chinaman seemed indignant that his silent answer had not been understood, for, with an angry grunt, he bobbed his head once more, and then drew his hand significantly across his throat. He stopped just long enough

to see that he was now understood, and then moved away.

After the sentinel was gone, Paul went back to his couch and sat down. He knew now the fate that was intended for him, but it was not the coming of death that moved him the most. The dread of the executioner was overcome by another emotion. He could only see the pale face of Yu-lu, and think that she, too, was suffering. After a while the youth went to the door and looked out through the grated aperture. He could see that he was some distance from the ground and that opposite to him, about a dozen yards distant, was a blank, massive wall. He had seen many Chinese prisons, where all the cells looked into a common yard, and he knew that he was now in no ordinary prison, for he was cut off from all view of his fellows, save the single sentry that guarded him, and it was evidently intended that he should have no opportunity for communication. It was surely a dismal prospect.

It must have been late in the afternoon when reason had come to Paul's mind, for ere long after he had left the door, the shades of night began to settle over the prison, and just at the time when the dusk begins to grow thicker with darkness, the sentinel stopped at the door and handed in a bottle and a cake of rice bread. The former he found to contain water, and the bread he was obliged to soak before he could eat it, and even then it was fulsome. He only forced down what nature actually required, and then set the remainder upon the floor. He had hardly taken his seat upon the edge of the cot ere he heard the sound of steps approaching his cell, and shortly afterwards his door was opened. The last glimmer of evening just revealed the outlines of the intruder, and in the tall straight form that stood against the background of space made by the open door, Paul recognized the juggler of Nankin.

"Is this Paul Ardeen?" the juggler asked, as he approached the cot.

The prisoner answered in the affirmative. He spoke tremblingly, for he felt like one who had done wrong, and for the first time the thought came to him that his having evaded the juggler was the direct cause of all he had since suffered.

"Do you remember when you stopped at the small inn on the western shore of the Tai-hou lake?"

"Yes," returned the youth.

"You had a boy with you?"

"Yes."

"Did you know that I was there at the same time?"

Paul hesitated for a moment, but it was not his nature to deliberately falsify, and he admitted the truth.

"Then you saw me, and went away on purpose to escape me?" said Ye-fu-hi.

"I confess that I did."

"Alas, Paul, you know not what you have done!" The old man spoke in a very strange, sad tone, and as he spoke he sat down upon the cot by Paul's side.

"Do you not remember the promise you gave me?" he continued. "Do you not remember the compact you made with me?"

"Yes."

"Then why should you have fled from me?"

"Because I feared you," answered the youth, after a moment's thought.

"Feared me! And what have I ever done that you should fear me? What have I said in your presence, or what suggested, that could have awakened such a thought in your bosom?"

"I cannot explain, sir," replied Paul, with evident embarrassment. "I can only tell you that I saw you come into the yard, and that both I and my companion feared you. For myself, sir, I should have had no fear, but for another's sake I even broke my promise with you—for that other's sake I would have even given up life itself."

"I have heard of your mishap," said Ye-fu-hi, "and I know whom you had with you."

"You do?" uttered Paul, starting up with excitement.

"Yes."

"And can you tell me what has become of my companion?"

"She is with the Prince of Nankin."

Paul Ardeen only groaned aloud, and sank back upon the cot. He covered his face with his hands, and the old man could hear that he was sobbing heavily.

"Paul," said the juggler, at the same time laying his hand upon the young man's shoulder, "you have wronged me most deeply, but I will not chide you, for I know how much you now suffer. When I set you to watch over the movements of the prince, I hoped you would be faithful to the trust I reposed in you. Had you done that, all would have been well. I could have led you clear of all danger, and

you should have lost nothing that you could have hoped to gain. It was a hold upon the prince I wanted, and had I gained possession of the maiden you found, and even had I led her into the very presence of the prince, you should not have lost her."

"Oh, sir! Can you not save her now," cried Paul, springing up and clasping his hands.

"I do not know. The prince is very powerful, and he now holds the maiden in his own hands. His own wife, I have heard, is dead. If he marry Yu-lu your hopes of her are gone."

"Oh, heaven, have mercy!"

"And then your own situation is not at all enviable," resumed the juggler.

Paul started at the words, and for a while his mind was drawn to the subject thus broached.

"Do you know what my fate is to be?" he whispered.

"It is not hard to guess," returned the other. "You are placed here to die. I know well what silent language these walls speak. When you are led forth from here it will be to die, and you will have but little warning of the coming fate."

"And is there no power to save me?" the youth asked. "Oh, if you could but get word to my countrymen at Shanghai, they would come and take me away. Can you not send them intelligence of my situation?"

"It would take nearly a week, at least, to bring the English here," said the juggler; "and your fate will surely be decided before that time. But let that rest for the present. I will help you if I can. I have gained admittance here by working upon the superstition of the guard, but I could not get you out, for the poor soldiers will not sacrifice their lives even to me. But for all that I may help you. Now tell me of what you found at the temples. Of course you cannot fear to trust me now."

Paul knew full well that no harm could come by his revealing the truth to his companion, and he hoped that if he were frank now it might work to his own good, so he commenced, and related all that he had seen and done at the ruined temples, even to his first interview with Yu-lu, and the growing of the love which had taken such a hold upon his heart. He could not see the juggler's face, but he could tell that he was much affected, for ever and anon sharp, ejaculatory sentences would break from his lips.

"Kong-ti is a great villain," uttered Ye-fu-hi, after Paul had concluded. "Oh, I wish you had trusted me, for then we might have thwarted him."

"Do not blame me," groaned the youth. "It was for Yu-lu's sake I acted as I did, for she feared you. We both of us had an instinctive dread that to answer your own ends you might place her again within the grasp of the wicked prince."

"It is past now," resumed the juggler, "and we must do the best we can. I do truly wish to save you, and I will if I can."

"And Yu-lu?" whispered Paul.

"If the Princess Niao lives I can save her; but if the princess be truly dead, then I fear there is little hope. But we must trust to time."

"Do you know Yu-lu?" the youth asked.

"I have seen her."

"And do you know the princess?"

"Well."

"The princess is related to you?"

"Ah, who told you that?"

"I heard it so whispered."

"I meant not that such a fact should have leaked out. But it can make no difference now. Niao is a noble woman, and she has been most basely wronged, and if it lies in my power she shall be revenged."

"Are you going to leave me?"

"I must, for my time has expired. But do not give way to total despair, for I think I can save your life. If it came within the reach of my power, even though half the soldiers in Nankin died in consequence, I would lead you forth from here now; but I cannot. The guard is very strong and resolute, and they are not to be overcome by any art of mine. Be assured that I will not lose sight of you."

Paul started up from the cot and seized the juggler by the arm.

"Save Yu-lu if you can!" he cried, with all the energy of his soul. "O, save her, and then my own liberty will be worth the having."

"You may hope for yourself," returned Ye-fu-hi.

"But Yu-lu is more than myself. She is the light of my soul—the joy of my heart, and without light and joy, life were but little else than a burden."

The juggler made no reply. Paul would have given much to have seen his face even, but the darkness concealed it, and its emotions were all hidden, and in a moment more the youth was alone. He heard the retreating footsteps of his visitor, and when they at length died away he threw himself upon his hard couch. For a while he pondered upon what had passed; but he did not ponder long, for the emo-



tions he had experienced worked hard upon his mind, and weakness overcame him. His sorrows and his cares were lost in unconsciousness. He felt a wild, dizzy sensation, but no pain, and with the attempt to grasp a phantom which imagination had hung in the air before him, he sank back into the rest of forgetfulness.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE Prince of Nankin walked up and down the apartment with quick, nervous strides. He was much agitated, and a casual observer would have needed no interpreter to tell him that the powerful grandee was suffering from more than usual anxiety. His face was pale, and his lips were compressed with a powerful effort to keep back the feelings that welled up from his soul. The beautiful Yu-lu was once more in his power, but he was far from satisfied with the position in which he was placed. His plot had been interrupted—it had not worked as he had intended. A few days ago, and he thought his plans were all moving smoothly on; but now a storm had come, and the fabric of his long-cherished plot was in danger of tumbling in pieces about his ears. He still held the tottering fragments up, but they bore hard upon him.

Thus was he pacing to and fro across his apartment, when Li entered his presence. He stopped as soon as he noticed his devoted servant and started towards him.

"Ha! Back so soon?" he uttered.

"Yes," replied Li, moving to a seat and placing his body in it.

"And what of Niso? Have you gained any trace of her?"

"Yes."

The prince started at this answer—a quick flush suffused his face, and then he also sat down.

"Speak," he said, in breathless anxiety. "Tell me what you have learned."

"Last night," commenced Li, "I went to the house where we left her, but none of the servants had heard from her. I searched through the neighbourhood most of the night, and when I returned to the house this morning a letter had been left there for you. No one knew who brought it, or at what hour it was left. It was found, tied to the handle of the outer door, by the porter, and he gave it to me. It was not sealed, and I read it, and I thought it best to place it in your hands as soon as possible."

As Li ceased speaking he drew the letter from his pocket and handed it to his master. It was written upon a piece of silk with India ink. The prince opened it and read as follows:

"To the most high and mighty Prince Kong-ti:—The good Princess Niso is dead! The very night after you last saw her she was seized upon by an evil spirit which stole away her reason. In this mood she arose from her bed and rushed from the house. I followed her, but she would not listen. She went to the great lake, and there she raved as one having a heavy soul, nor would she suffer me to approach. She spoke to Tien-tan to take her spirit, and to Tee-tan she gave her body. She threw herself into the lake, and the dark waters closed over her. We shall see her no more, I would have come to you, but I feared your wrath. This is written by your most unworthy slave, Tsr."

"Do you believe that?" asked the prince, after he had read the missive through the second time.

"It may be true," returned Li. "I think it is true. The beverage she drank may have made her crazy."

"Very likely," said Kong-ti; and then, while a look of relief passed over his features, he added: "I am glad this is so, for now her blood rests not on my hands. She took her own life. By the Imperial Joss, the thing shall be made public. Poor woman! She is gone, and I am left without a wife."

Li smiled as he heard these words, but the prince was serious. Kong-ti did not speak as with the meaning of a joke, but with the thought of the hypocrite. He was rehearsing the part he was to play before the world.

"You may go," he said to Li, "and tell the sad news to my people. Give orders to the mandarins that all amusements in the city be stopped, and have the temples opened to the mourners. It is a sad blow, Li—a sad blow. She was a good woman—too good to live. Go, and leave me alone in my sorrow. Tell the servants that no one shall see me to-day, for I will not be disturbed in my grief."

The attendant withdrew, and as soon as the prince was left alone, he started up from his seat and clasped his hands upon his head.

"Not all lost yet!" he exclaimed, while an exulting look broke over his features. "By the child of the Sun, this thing works well. Now to Yu-lu—and then for the finishing of that bold youth who would have snatched her from me."

Yu-lu sat within a sumptuously furnished apartment, and near her stood her former keeper Lan. The maiden was pale and wan, and the livid hue about her eyes told how long and freely she had wept. Her fair features were all wrought in agony, and her brow was pencilled with the pain that worked in the brain. She sat there with her head resting upon her hands, when she was startled by the entrance of the prince. She shuddered when she saw him, and a groan of despair broke from her lips. Kong-ti motioned for Lan to leave the room, and then he sat down by the maiden's side.

"Bright sunlight of my life," he said, in a low, melancholy tone, "the blow has come, and where shall I look for joy or hope, but in you? Niso is dead!"

Yu-lu covered her face with her hands, and shuddered.

"Read this," continued the prince, handing her the silken missive which Li had brought.

The maiden took it, and with trembling hands she held it. She read it, and still she shuddered. She thought it possible that the ill-fated princess had taken her own life, but she felt sure, also, that the husband's cruelty had driven her to the act.

"Dear Yu-lu," resumed the prince, after he had received back the letter; "this blow has not come upon me so hard as it would had I not been prepared for it. Niso had long been subject to these fits, and I expected she would have died long ago, but some mysterious power has held her up. I think it was the direct will of heaven that she should live until you were prepared to take her place. You will soon be called upon now to assume the station for which I have had you fitted."

"Let me follow Niso," groaned the maiden, "and I will bless you."

"So you shall, sweet Yu-lu. You shall commence to follow where she commenced a score of years ago."

"No, no. Be kind, and let me die now!"

"Not until you are my wife."

"That I can never be."

"That you shall be."

"Oh, be merciful!"

"I mean to be."

"Let me not suffer such a wrong."

"Beware that you do not suffer a greater!"

Yu-lu started, for these words were spoken strangely and fearfully.

"You should know me by this time," the prince added, with a meaning shake of the head. "You are mine—all mine—and I will make you my wife."

The maiden shrank back and burst into tears. They were hot scalding tears, for they came from a heart that was bursting with indignation; but she dared not show all her feelings. She had been so long subject to the power of the prince that the bond seemed almost by nature her portion, and she feared to awaken the wrath of one who seemed to be, in truth, her master. But aside from all this, the terrible threat last made had sank into her soul more deeply than all else. She shrank from such a fate as a child would from the blood-stained hand of the midnight murderer. She was bound hand and foot, and even her speech she dared not use. She would have asked concerning Paul Ardeen, but she dared not do it. Once she had mentioned his name, and the fearful storm of passion which it called up had frightened her from repeating it.

"Yu-lu," said the prince, after a few moments of reflection. "I hope we may have no more conversation of this kind. I forgive you for attempting to escape from me, and freely take you back to my love. Beware that you do not lose it. Now, when my season of mourning is passed, I shall give to you the station you are so well qualified to fill, and for which I have expended so much to have you fitted. I am sorry that poor Niso is dead, but it was not in my power to prevent it. It was the will of the great Tien-tan, and his will must be done. I bow to the decree, and I hope I am resigned."

(To be continued.)

THE pay of Volunteer Adjutants appointed since May 16, 1867, has been reduced 2s. a day by a recent circular issued by the War-Office. It is said that Sir John Pakington stated to Lord Elcho and the deputation who waited upon him a few months ago that, although the capitation grant was in some instances no longer disbursed by Adjutants, it was not the intention of the present Government to reduce the pay of those who were then appointed, but it might affect those who were appointed hereafter.

THE SCULPTURE GALLERIES OF THE LOUVRE.—Those who visit Paris will find a great change in the lower floor of the museum of the Louvre. The portion of the building known as the apartments of Anne of Austria, which has for many years been devoted to Grecian and Roman sculptures, has been

completely restored and embellished, and is now approached through a fine gallery in the new Louvre, in which is a curious collection of statues and busts of Roman Emperors, principally from the Campana museum, and some other interesting antiques. Between the two galleries is a smaller one, in which a large number of specimens of sculpture, of the Roman and old French schools, are now seen to great advantage; and they possess much interest, not only in an artistic, but also in a historical point of view. The second gallery referred to is that in which the fine electrotype reproductions of Trajan's Column were recently to be seen. They have been removed, and we are not aware whether they are now exhibited. On the upper floor, the small room, which formerly contained the charming collection of engraved and jewelled crystal and other cups and ornaments now seen to great advantage in the noble Galerie d'Apollon, has been devoted to eight frescoes, by Luini, or some artist of his school, which were purchased in Italy a short time since. Scarcely a month passes without some marked improvement in the Louvre. The galleries devoted to French art have been greatly increased during the last two years, and they will be still further extended next year, by the removal of the Salle des Etats to that part of the great gallery which joins the Tuileries.

## FLORIAN.

## CHAPTER IX.

STRAIGHTWAY to Charon's palace Florian bent his steps, and when he reached the vestibule, where a guard was stationed, he inquired for Claudius, the imperial ambassador. Whether the soldier was favourably impressed by the applicant's voice, or whether it was respect for the garb may not be determined; but he received the request most graciously, and made friendly answer.

"I would like to speak with the ambassador," said Florian.

"Are you acquainted with him?"

"No—I never saw him; but I will explain, my son. I seek a passage to Constantinople; and I hope to gain one from Claudius."

The sentinel reflected a little while, and finally told the seeming dervish that he might enter.

Florian passed in through the vestibule, into the inner court of the house, and being well acquainted with the customs of the wealthy classes, he had no difficulty in determining which were the master's apartments, and going whither his judgment directed, he inquired of a servant where he could find the imperial ambassador.

"He is in the garden with the master," was the response.

Florian saw the open arched way which led from the court to the garden, and when he had passed through, he found himself in one of the most beautiful, as well as one of the most extensive, gardens he had ever beheld. He had deemed the garden attached to Bozaria's house a grand place; but it was as a simple patch compared with this. There were trees of every description; flowering shrubs, vines and bushes; flowers that hung from tiny stalks, and flowers that rested upon the bosom of the earth; fruit of every variety native to the clime; with walks in white sand, and walks paved with the finest marble, and broad squares, too, with arbours and fountains, paved in richest mosaic, and adorned with the grandest statuary. It was an extensive place, and the rich foliage was so dense, and its walks so labyrinthine, that a stranger might almost have been lost within its flowery mazes.

After threading a number of rounding paths Florian heard voices in the distance, and having determined the direction from whence they came, he walked that way. He had not gone far when he came out into a paved court, or circular reserve, in the centre of which was a fountain. Orange trees grew upon the edge of the place, and the paths branching away from it were flanked with flowering shrubs.

Our hero stopped, forgetting for the time the voices in the distance. He stood upon the edge of a broad, deep, marble basin, with steps leading down from the margin, and in the centre was a beautiful representation, or statue, of a fisher-boy, in pure white marble. In his arms the boy held a fish, from the mouth of which issued a jet of water; and as Florian gazed upon the scene, he could comprehend how a child might stand, as he then stood, and wonder from whence the fish derived its ceaseless supply of water.

There they were,—the orange trees, the flowers; the many fine figures of white marble; the fountain, its basin, broad and deep, and in the centre the little boy with the fish in his arms, and the water, in wondrous supply, issuing from the fish's mouth;

and the marble steps, too, down which a child might creep towards the rippling lakelet within the basin,—all there, just as Electa had told him she had seen it in her earliest childhood.

Was it possible that this could be the place? Aye—it must be so; for Florian felt sure that there was not another garden like this in Syracuse. Again he surveyed the scene, and had the maiden stood by his side, she could not have described it more completely.

And then the signs of age were apparent on every hand. The trees, the shrubs, the walks, and the fountain, all bore the marks of time, and the youth could not doubt that he stood where Electa had stood in the time of which she had told him.

And could it be possible that Electa was the child of Charon. Oh! how fervently did Florian pray that such might not be.

Of all the men in Syracuse whom he had reason to despise for their tyranny, their wickedness, and for their base subservience to the enemies of Sicily—for the eagerness with which they bartered away the liberties of the people for place and power,—the Senator Charon was one of the most servile and grasping.

"Oh; great heaven! vouchsafe to me the hope that Electa is not the child of this man!"

And yet here had been Charon's home for many years—a score at least, he thought; and this, too, must have been Electa's home.

Florian was aroused from his reverie by the approach of those whose voices he had heard, and presently he saw the proud senator emerge from a path near at hand, and with him came the Roman ambassador, which he knew by the rich garb, and the pompous air. The seeming dervish waited until the party had reached the side of the fountain where he stood, and then he spoke. He addressed Charon first, simply saluting him as lord of the place; after which he turned to the Roman, and asked him if he spoke with the noble Claudius. The ambassador gave an affirmative answer, upon which the suppliant made known his business.

"I am alone," said Florian, "and my effects can be carried upon my shoulder. I have no money wherewith to pay for my passage; but if a price be demanded I think I can obtain it."

Others had followed Charon and Claudius, and to one of these the ambassador turned and spoke, and after a brief consultation the dervish was informed that he could not be accommodated.

"If we take one, we must take all who apply; and our ship would not hold them; and, moreover, the ship of the imperial ambassador is not a common vehicle for the transporting of the rabble."

"I find no fault, my son," replied the dervish, with a low bow, "Your decision is just. But, having heard that you would not sail before the expiration of a week, I thought—"

"A week" interrupted Claudius. "You have been misinformed, sir. Our ship will sail on the day after to-morrow."

The dervish reflected a moment, and then said with a show of extreme humility:

"I have a brother in Constantinople, and if I cannot see him at present, it would afford me much pleasure if I could send him a letter of greeting. Would you permit one of your sailors to bear an epistle to my brother?"

The ambassador had no objection to that.

"And when must I deliver the letter?"

"Any time to-morrow, or very early on the morning of the succeeding day; as we shall sail before noon."

Having thanked the ambassador for his kindness, and taken one more look at the fisher-boy and his inexhaustible fish, he turned and left the noble party to themselves.

Florian knew the ambassador's ship, and also knew where it lay; and as soon as he had gained the public highway, he bent his steps from the city towards the sea, where, at a landing appropriated to the vessels of the government, he found the craft he sought, and also the crew busily engaged in making ready for their departure. Having selected a man whose countenance gave token of a friendly and communicative disposition, our hero approached him, and spoke of sending a letter to a dear and valued friend in Constantinople. He said he had seen Claudius, and that he was willing one of his men should bear the missive.

The sailor bade the dervish bring his letter as soon as he pleased, intimating pretty strongly that he would take it, whether the proud ambassador were willing or not.

Our adventurer had found his man separate from his companions, and having discovered in him a frank and generous spirit, with a spice of hatred for the proud and overbearing nobles, he ventured to tell how Claudius had refused him passage, adding the remark:

"I suppose there is no room on board the ship for a poor, friendless man like myself."

"There's room enough for a hundred like you!" was the sailor's emphatic response.

"Has not the ambassador a large retinue of his own?"

"Not so great to return as he had to come, good father. There are only six of them."

"Then there are the soldiers," suggested Florian.

"Soldiers?"

"The soldiers who go as guardians of the treasure."

"There are no soldiers at all, good father, unless you please to call the servants soldiers. There are half-a-score of them."

"And how many sailors have you?"

"There are twenty of us who are hired as such; but when we come to use our oars we make these lazy servants work."

"Six gentlemen, ten servants, and twenty sailors—six-and-thirty souls—and not room enough for the poor dervish in the ship!"

"You count correctly, father."

Carefully the dervish pursued his investigations, and finally he went on board the ship with his friend, and was shown through the different apartments. The untutored sailors had great respect for the holy man, and none made objection to his presence.

He examined the hold of the vessel, and when he had seen where the merchandise was stowed, he sought to know when it would be all taken on board. To this his cicerone replied that it was nearly all on board then. A few articles of baggage belonging to the embassy would come down on the morrow, and before another night everything would be ready for sailing.

"I shall bring my letter to-morrow evening, and I hope you will be here to receive it. I seem poor, and so I am; but I can afford a good, bright piece of gold to him who does me this service."

"A piece of gold I never owned," said the sailor.

"Then to-morrow night you shall own one."

The sailor was anxious. The thought of owning a piece of gold was a new thought to him, and he would not that it should end in disappointment.

"Be sure," he said, "and come at the going down of the sun, for I shall be on the watch. If you see me not, inquire for Gobar."

The dervish promised, and having thanked the sailor for his kindness, he took his leave.

Florian had intended to visit Orlando before leaving the city, but he could not stop to do it now. If he would secure the rich prize offered in the ambassador's ship, he had need of haste; so he bent his steps at once towards the western gate. He was at the portal, answering a question put by the sentinel, when he heard his own name pronounced by an officer who stood at the door of the guard-house. Upon looking that way he saw a second officer, whom he recognized as his former commander, the centurion Zerbino, and under cover of the plea of resting awhile, he sat down upon the stone bench and listened.

"It is a most unaccountable thing," he heard Zerbino reply to the officer who had pronounced his name. "Florian had charge of the watch until midnight, at which time he was relieved by Orlando. Orlando declares that he returned to the camp, and that he saw him not again. And one of the soldiers, who had come off at the same hour, declared that he saw Florian come into the camp, but his eyes were heavy, and he did not remain awake to observe farther. We know that he was alive and well at the time."

"I have heard it said that he was dissatisfied with the service of the king," remarked the first speaker.

"Yes," returned the centurion.

"And," pursued the other, "it has been whispered that he has joined the banditti of the mountains."

"Which I think is true," responded Zerbino.

"A reward has been offered for his discovery?"

"But," explained the centurion, "it will be a reward for discovery no longer. The king, fully assured that Florian has joined the banditti, has set a price upon his head."

"Is not that premature?"

"No; because, at best, he can only be accounted a deserter. The price is set, and whoever brings his head to the king will gain the reward."

Florian waited to hear no more. This was the information he would have sought at Orlando's hands, and now he had gained it without loss of time. For the moment, the words he had heard gave him trouble; but it was only for the moment. What else could he have expected? Surely, nothing. So he hurried on, thinking, as he went, that are long the Emperor Tiberius might have occasion to set a farther price upon his head.

It was dark when our adventurer reached the mountain cave, and having related to the chieftain the principal events of the day, and made general

arrangements for the morrow, he retired to his chamber, where, until sleep took up his senses, he burdened himself with troublesome thoughts of Electa and the hard-hearted Senator Charon. One resolution, however, he firmly made: he would not breathe a word of the discovery he had made, until he had had opportunity to make some little inquiry touching the former history of Charon. He meant to discover, if possible, if the man had ever lost a child.

With the dawn of day our hero was astir; and, as Bayard had given him direction, he proceeded to select the men who should accompany him upon his expedition against the imperial embassy. He did not call the whole band out, because he was sure that nearly every man would wish to accompany him, and he would be forced to disappoint many; but he went out and addressed them as he met them, and very soon he had thirty men picked out; and that they would be true he knew, by the jubilant manner in which they accepted his proposition.

Shortly after dinner, the chosen number were assembled in the cavern, where each man was furnished with such garb as Florian chose. Some he clad as fishermen; some as fruit-vendors; some as peasants; and some as sailors. For arms each man took a stout dagger and a billet of iron. This latter weapon was one of Bayard's own contrivance, being a bar, or truncheon, of iron, about four palms in length, with a convenient handle upon one end, and a pommel, or knob, upon the other. By a proper use of this instrument an enemy could be deprived of his senses without destroying life; and in the hands of one who knew how to use it, it was truly a formidable weapon. Bayard declared that he would rather have it than a dozen daggers; and thus simply armed, he had often, in sport, challenged the best spearman in his band. Another advantage of this weapon—an advantage which the dagger had as well—it could be concealed beneath the tunic without trouble.

When all else had been provided for, Florian went with Bayard to the medicine-box, where they prepared a powder, fit to be dissolved in wine; but, in order that it might be used more readily, our hero mixed it with a small quantity of sweet wine in a phial. Upon the efficacy of this subtle agent depended everything, and the utmost care was taken in its preparation.

At the eighth hour of the day Florian, clad, as before, in his dervish's garb, led his men down the mountain, and at the foot he dismissed them, it having been fully arranged how, when, and where, they should next meet.

Just as the sun was sinking the dervish made his appearance at the landing where the ambassador's ship was secured, and he had the good fortune to find Gobar on the watch. The letter was produced—a folded piece of parchment, bound with a strip of the same material, and closely sealed—and when the sailor had taken it, and put it carefully away in his bosom, the dervish gave him a piece of gold worth two aurei. This was more money than the man had ever possessed, and he was pleased beyond bounds.

They conversed until the shades of night had gathered over the city, the dervish persuading the sailor to tell him of the great city of the East, when the former proposed that they should drink wine together before they separated—a proposition which Gobar accepted readily.

"You have companions on the watch?"

"Yes, father—two of them upon the deck of this ship."

"Will they not partake with us?"

"I can swear they love wine."

"Then do you call them, while I go and procure the beverage. I have a friend not far away who has some of the best and purest wine I ever tasted."

The dervish went away; when he returned he found the three sailors waiting for him; and when he learned that they were to remain on the watch until midnight he was well pleased.

Gobar pronounced the wine excellent. His companions declared that Claudius himself never drank better. And the dervish sustained them in their declaration, asserting that better wine was never made.

They drank until the bottle was exhausted, after which their entertainer wished them a prosperous voyage, and took his leave.

An hour later all was hushed and still upon the quay, and within the ship Gobar lay upon a coil of rope, sleeping so soundly that the clang of the cathedral bell disturbed him not; while on the deck of the ship the other two guardians were equally oblivious to all outward signs, one at the stern snugly ensconced within the folds of the driving sail, the other at the bows, with only a hard block for a pillow.

When the fourth hour of the night had come, shadowy forms approached the ship. One in the



semblance of a dervish came first, and cast off the covering from the entrance to the hold; and anon others came, gliding down, one by one, into the bowels of the vessel. When the dervish had counted thirty comers, he descended himself into the hold, above him. Then he brought forth a small lantern, by and drew the hatch carefully into its proper place the light of which he and his companions found safe hiding places among the bales of merchandise that had been stowed there. Some friendly spirit must have been in attendance upon Gobar, for just as the cathedral bell told the hour of midnight he awoke, and, having recovered his scattered senses, he looked for his companions, whom he found still soundly sleeping. He aroused them, however, and when the three had come to realise what they had done, they took counsel together, agreeing that they would call their relief, and speak no more of the fault they had committed.

"It was the wine," said he who had slept upon the stern, and he of the bows was of the same opinion. "Yea," said Gobar, "it was the wine. It is deceptive. We are not used to that kind of wine, and we doubtless drank more than we ought."

## CHAPTER X.

No sooner had the tops of the distant mountains caught the first golden beams of morning, flashing down upon plain, city and sea, than the crew of the ambassador's ship was astir. Claudius had appointed the second hour of the day as the time for sailing, and there was much to be done in the way of getting ready. First, one-half the crew went up to the royal palace, where the ambassador had spent this last night of his stay, and when they returned they bore upon their shoulders strong oaken boxes, bound with brazen straps, and before them, behind them, and upon either side, marched armed men, to the number of four-score; for it had been whispered in Syracuse that Bayard had set his heart upon that golden store, and the king was determined that it should be safely conveyed beyond his jurisdiction.

Whence that whisper come, none could tell: only it was known that Bayard had threatened to rob the imperial train; and it was furthermore said that the robber chieftain had solemnly declared that not another ounce of tribute should go from Sicily to the court of the proud Roman.

There was much wealth in those oaken chests. In Palermo, in Messina, in Catania, and in Syracuse, the officers had collected the tribute money for the year, and now the men of the ambassador's ship bore it all upon their shoulders. Strong men they were, but they faltered beneath the burden, and more than once upon the way, they were forced to halt and rest. At length, however, the treasure was safely deposited on board the ship, and the soldiers arranged themselves upon the quay, there to keep guard until the sails should have been spread and the vessel wafted beyond the reach of the mountain brigands. By the time the boxes had been properly stowed away, all was ready for sailing, and ere long afterwards the sound of trumpets and cymbals announced the approach of the imperial embassy. They came with great pomp—Claudius in the rear, riding upon a milk-white steed, gorgeously trapped and caparisoned, with a detachment of the royal guard upon either hand.

A few there were whose only emotions were those of wonder and admiration; but the mass gazed on in silence, in their hearts secretly cursing the power thus represented—a power that held them in servile vassalage, and stripped them of their substance as well as of their liberty.

"A fair wind, your Excellency," said the captain of the ship, as Claudius came on board.

"For which I am very thankful," responded the ambassador, indicating by his tone and bearing that the Ruler of the Winds had done no more than show him proper respect.

"Shall we make sail, Excellency?"

"You may make sail, captain. I will remain on deck while you do so."

Seats were brought for the ambassador and his retinue; and though they were much in the way, yet no murmur of disapprobation did the cramped seamen dare to utter.

Another flourish of trumpets and clang of cymbals announced that the ship had started upon her return voyage, and the din was kept up until the bark was fairly sailing away from the shore; after which the musicians turned from the quay, as though ashamed of the work they had been doing. Others remained to watch the ship as long as it remained in sight, evidently praying that it might sink ere it ever came back again.

At the end of the quay stood a number of peasants, who had watched the departing ship, until it seemed a mere white speck upon the edge of the watery field; and as they finally turned away, one of the number said:

"The Roman is safe from Bayard's clutches this time, for which I am sorry."

And he but expressed the sentiment of the others, if one might judge by the commendatory manner in which the remark was received.

And how was it on board the imperial bark the while?

Claudius remained on deck until the vessel was well out at sea, when he went down into the sumptuously-furnished cabin, and looked to it that the treasure had been safely stowed in the space beneath the floor. After this he made such change in his garb as was befitting the occasion, and then returned to the deck where he arrived just in time to observe a strange excitement on the part of the crew, who had collected about the waist of the ship.

"What is the cause of this disturbance?" he asked of the captain.

"See!" replied that officer, pointing to a figure that had emerged from the hold.

The ambassador looked, and beheld the self-same dervish to whom he had refused passage in the garden of Charon; and in no way pleasant tones, he demanded to know how the man had come on board.

"We do not know," said the captain. "No one can tell me. I only know that, a few minutes since, the hatch was thrown violently up, and this strange man made his appearance."

Having heard thus much, Claudius advanced in vengeful mood, and angrily addressed the intruder:

"How now, vile dog! How came you here? How gained you a hiding-place in our ship?"

"It was very easily done, Claudius. I came at night while the guards were asleep."

"Asleep! My guards asleep!" cried the ambassador.

He was about to proceed to the work of discovering the delinquent sentinels, when the dervish interrupted him:

"Hold, my son! Your men were not to blame. They were overcome by a power they could not resist."

"And what hoped you to gain, sirrah?"

"A passage in your ship, Claudius."

"Now, by the gods!" exclaimed the exasperated minister, "this fellow doth mock me! What ho there! Seize upon him, men! seize and bind him! Let him not open that foul mouth again!"

"Beware!" pronounced the dervish, raising his hand towards those who would have advanced upon him. "The power that cast its potent spell upon the guard, can cast a spell upon you, from which you might never awake! Tempt me not, for I would not bring harm upon an honest man. I only seek to bring just retribution upon base and servile tyrants and the baser tools of tyrants."

Claudius stamped his foot with rage, and withdrawn sword he sprang towards the boldly-spoken man; but he did not reach him. Between himself and the dervish was the open hatch, and as he made the first bound a man started up from the hold directly before him, crying out, as he nimbly leaped to the deck:

"Back, base wretch! He whom you would strike is our master!"

And this man was followed by another—and by another—and another—and another still. And on they came, like as the armed men sprang up from the earth, where Cadmus had sowed the dragon's teeth; only these men did not slay each other, but stood together like a band of brothers, ready to obey their master.

And now Florian, when his men had all come forth from the hold of the ship, threw off the dervish's robe, and the white hair and beard, revealing a stalwart youth, in whose eye flashed the fire of vengeance. He had judged rightly in believing that the sudden appearance of his men would strike such terror and consternation to the hearts of the sailors that they would not think of offering resistance until it was too late. In fact, the astounded crew knew not what to do, for they comprehended not what this marvellous thing could signify; so they stood in fear and trembling, waiting for an explanation.

Not so, however, the ambassador. When he saw the dervish suddenly transformed into a bold and daring captain, he knew that the mountain banditti had come for the treasure he bore from the shores of Sicily; and, with a flourish of his sword, he called upon his men to drive the intruders into the sea.

Without a word, Florian advanced, and with an adroit sweep of his iron truncheon he knocked the ambassador's sword from his grasp, then seizing the disarmed man by the neck-band of his toga, he hurled him to the deck, whereupon two of the banditti, who had been appointed for such work, quickly bound the dignitary, hand and foot.

And after this Florian made his business known.

"You may call us robbers; you may call us outlaws; you may call us what you will; but we do our

work with a clear conscience. The money you have on board this ship has been literally stolen from my people. The Island of Sicily has been robbed. Tiberius is the robber chief, and those who collect the taxes which he has imposed upon a conquered nation, are but his followers in this unholy business. I have come to carry the treasure back, and if there be any who would oppose my claim, let them stand forth."

Claudius, from his place on the deck, called aloud upon the servants, and upon the sailors, to drive the villains into the sea; and the noble gentlemen who constituted his suite at length gathered courage to second their superior's request; though they did not themselves offer to lead the way. There was something in the looks of those hardy and daring mountaineers not at all inviting, and the dainty courtiers preferred that the sailors should put the strangers into the sea.

But what had the sailors at stake save their own lives? Were they attacked they would defend themselves; but if the banditti did not molest them, they would not invite a conflict from which it was perfectly plain that they must come forth the vanquished; so they turned a deaf ear to the commands of the Romans, and awaited the will and pleasure of the bandit chief.

"Those only who disturb me shall I molest," said Florian; "and even those whom I am forced to restrain of their liberty shall be in no way harmed if they offer no resistance. These gentlemen I must for the present secure."

He pointed to the Roman nobles, and a dozen of his men approached them for the purpose of binding them. Once more they sought to excite the ship's crew to action; but the latter failed to see wherein they should be the gainers by such a procedure, and wisely stood back.

In a very few minutes the truculent nobles were secured, after which our hero addressed the crew in a calm, straightforward manner, informing them that he deemed the collecting of the taxes which had been imposed upon his people by the Roman emperor as no better than robbery, and that he had come for the purpose of taking them back. He asked not to be considered a patriot,—he was willing to be called a bandit—only he assured his hearers that much of the treasure would find its way back to the poor people from whom it had been taken; and more than that—those who were suffering from the gnawing pangs of poverty should have more than they had before. At least a third of the whole sum would be thus distributed.

"And," he said, in conclusion, "I will see that the crew of the ship are paid their wages in full. Let each man come to me with a true statement of his just claim, and I will see that he has his money."

And then Florian told them that he wished to be landed at a point on the coast between Catania and Lenze, in the direction of Mount Ætna. He hoped they would steer the ship thither at his simple request. He regarded only the rich and powerful as his enemies; the humble sons of toil were his friends.

He had struck the right chord in the bosom of the sailors, and every man of them bowed in token of willing submission. Many and divers were the threats of the ambassador and his companions; and the former, particularly, declared, under bond of the most solemn oath, that he would not rest until he had seen the robbers brought to justice. If there were not soldiers enough in Syracuse, he would go over into Italy. Florian listened to him until he cared to listen no longer, and then he cast the noble minister into the hold, and closed the hatch upon him. After this, quiet reigned on the deck of the ship, and when the course had been changed, and the cleaving prow pointed towards the towering volcano, our hero took a few of the sailors with him, and brought forth the boxes of treasure. All that was of especial value, and at the same time of convenient bulk to be removed, was gathered together; and when, towards nightfall, the ship had cast her anchor near to the spot which Florian had selected for his landing, the boats were lowered, and the treasure was taken to the shore. The sailors brought forward their claims for wages, and the bandit paid to each man more than he had demanded; and when he finally bade them adieu, he had the satisfaction of believing that not a soul of them all bore him other than kindly feelings. They had lost nothing, but had rather been the gainers by his visit.

When the last robber had left the ship, and the boats had returned, Claudius called his servants, and went on shore, determined to follow the banditti as far as possible. He was exasperated beyond measure, and in view of the immense sum of gold and silver, of precious stones and choice merchandise, which had been taken from him, he counted his life as nothing when set against the escape of the robbers.

He took a score of men, and made all possible haste to the little hamlet whither the outlaws had

bent their steps with their booty. Arrived at this point, he learned that those whom he sought had taken horses and ridden away towards the mountains. So he proposed to follow. But here he met with difficulty. Not a horse was to be found. The banditti had taken every one.

And so night gathered its dark mantle over shore and sea while the ambassador was thus vainly at work, and in the end he was forced to return to his ship, and make sail for Syracuse.

When the morning dawned there was a wondrous commotion in the capital. The ambassador's ship had returned, and it was known that the mountain banditti had robbed her of every ounce of treasure which she bore. But a greater source of wonder than the simple robbery had come to light. Claudius had minutely described the appearance of the youth who had led the outlaws, and the king knew that Florian must be the man. Charon, Bomaria, and the centurion Zerbino, were called, and upon consultation, and a comparing of notes, it was decided that Florian had done the bold and flagrant deed; whereupon a reward of one thousand pieces of gold was offered for the apprehension of the youthful deserter, and a sum equal to one-half that amount was offered for his head.

Heralds were sent through the city, and into the count y, announcing the price that had been set upon the apprehension of Florian, alive, and also the price that would be paid for Florian's head.

But this was not all. Claudius sought the king, and represented to him what would be the emperor's rage, when he knew that this vast sum had been lost.

"A sum," said the ambassador, "equal to all the revenues from the imperial city itself for the space of a twelvemonth—a sum upon which he is depending for the payment of his officers, and the reduction of his personal indebtedness. Do you realise, Vestales, how large the sum we have lost is?"

The king groaned.

"I have good reason to know, since I have been a full year in collecting it."

"And," pursued Claudius, "do you think the emperor will suffer you to remain in office if this treasure be lost? More than once hath he already charged you to apprehend those robbers; and now it appears that instead of diminishing their power, your own best officers are going over to them!"

"Wait, wait, good Claudius," cried Vestales. "Wait!" he repeated, smiting his hand upon his breast. "I will call forth every soldier in my realm—I will impress every man who can bear arms, if need be,—I will move heaven and earth to find these robbers; and when they are found you shall bear to our emperor the Sicilian tribute. Will you wait?"

"Yes,—and more, too, I will help you in the work. I know not why it is; but of a truth, I feel more eagerness to hold that youthful outlaw in my power than I do to regain the treasure we have lost. Oh! I shall not rest until I see Florian in irons at my feet! By the gods! he shall know what it costs to put indignity upon the chosen ambassador of Tiberius!"

(To be continued.)

## MICHEL-DEVER.

### CHAPTER LXV.

MAY made no reply to this long address—in fact, she scarcely listened to it, for her thoughts had wandered away to her letter, and were busy with plans for placing it safely in the hands of Dr. Brandon. She could devise nothing better than feigning a sudden attack of illness, but she feared that her shrewd guardian would penetrate that ruse, and insist on treating her slight indisposition herself, without the aid of a physician.

The weary hours passed on, seeming of interminable length to the unhappy girl. Mrs. Black was one of that class of teachers who lecture on each branch of knowledge they undertake to impart; and in spite of May's evident inattention, she went through the routine of studies appointed for the day—explaining and illustrating as she proceeded.

Under other circumstances, May would have listened with both pleasure and profit; but in the present state of her feelings, the monotonous tones of Mrs. Black's voice grated on her ears as the croaking of a raven, and she perversely closed her inner sense to all she was saying.

The dinner over, the governess read aloud from Rollin's ancient history, which the enforced listener thought as dry as the dust of the centuries that have rolled away since its heroes acted their little drama in this world of ours. When that was ended, May was told to practise, but music had no charms for her in the discordant state of her mind, and she coolly declined. Mrs. Black did not insist, for she saw that it would be useless; and May sat listlessly

folding her hands, while her companion uttered a monologue on the duties of children to their parents, and to the society of which they were preparing to become members. She was one of that class of women who must talk, whether the audience be congenial or not, and all I have to say of such is, "heaven help the listeners!"

The supper hour at last rolled round, and the summons to the dining-room was obeyed with alacrity by the weary girl. She wished that Mrs. Black could be induced to eat on until bed-time, that her unwearied tongue might cease to wag. But the meal was soon dispatched, and May was returning to her prison, when a message came to her from Mrs. Benson, asking her to come to her room.

Mrs. Gandy was the messenger, and May proudly said:

"It is useless to ask me to go anywhere, without first obtaining the consent of my gaoler. I am not a free agent, Mrs. Gandy."

"Few girls of your age are allowed to be, Miss Thorne," said Mrs. Black, with asperity, "but I have no objection to your going to see the housekeeper. I know it is not her fault that you have been led so far astray as you have lately gone. You can remain with Mrs. Benson twenty minutes, and I will avail myself of the opportunity to give some orders about the management of the place. My talents are of a versatile order, and I am glad to have a new field for their exercise."

May did not stop to hear the end of her speech. Little as she liked Mrs. Benson, she found her presumptuous ignorance less repulsive than the everlasting stream of words that flowed from the lips of this insatiable talker. She hurried away, glad to get beyond the sound of Mrs. Black's voice, and soon found herself beside the couch of the invalid.

As soon as she came near, Mrs. Benson abruptly began:

"I ain't no better, Miss May, so don't waste no time in axin' of me 'bout myself, caze I've got suffin else to talk 'bout, an' we ain't got much time. Miss Gander's gone to her supper, but she won't stay long, an' what I've got to dispatiate 'pon I don't want her to know nothin' 'bout. Come closer, an' tell me what yer thinks o' the detrusion of that talkin' woman in this house."

May laughed bitterly.

"I think it as unwarrantable as your conduct to me was before she came. I have only changed keepers, that is all; but she is more detestable to me than you were."

"Hush, Miss May, don't talk that way. 'T've repented of what I done to vex yer, an' I'm on your side now. If I can help yer I'll do it, an' mebbe I can, though I'm laid up here like a old busted steam biler."

The young girl listened with some surprise and a little incredulity. She hurriedly asked:

"What has brought about such a change, Mrs. Benson? Excuse me if I feel a little doubtful as to your sincerity."

"You need not do that, Miss May, for I am in earnest. Yer pain't treated me right, an' I'm ready to show him that I can do suffin' in my turn, as 'll make him think he'd better not ha' sent that palaverin' woman here to lord it over us all. I'm ready to help you all I can to git out'n her clutches, even if you runs right inter yer lover's arms."

May blushed and laughed; but she eagerly caught at the straw held out to her, and said:

"If you will do that, Mrs. Benson, I will forgive all you have hitherto done to annoy me. I am wretched with that woman, and I do all I can to vex her; but that is not much satisfaction, and I shall go wild if I have to listen to her harangues every day of my life. Upon your honour, will you help me and be true to me?"

"I'll help you to circumvent ner wi' all my heart, Miss May, for I hate a stuck-up old chatter-box! She ain't no lady, even if she has the iddication to use all them long words she's so fond of. If you want letters sent to that young man as has lately ha'nted the groun', I'll take 'em an' send 'em by Carrots. He knows better 'n not to do what I tells him."

"Thank you," replied May, still hesitating to trust her. "I shall be glad to send a note I have written to Doctor Brandon. I wish to consult him, but Mrs. Black will scarcely admit him to our parlour again, even if he should wish to come. If you will take charge of that, and give it to him to-morrow morning when he calls, I shall feel very grateful."

"Give it to me, my dear, and I will reposit it in his own hands without nobody belin' the wiser."

May drew forth the envelope, and with a lead-pencil she took from her pocket, wrote on the corner.

"I can see Mrs. B. every day, and through her can communicate with you.—M. T."

She then said:

"I am compelled to trust you, Mrs. Benson.—I can only hope that you will not betray me. Give my letters to Doctor Brandon himself, as Barney will hardly be a safe messenger."

"Just as you please—I only injected him for want of a better—I'll do anything to discomfite the doins of that 'ere new woman."

The letter was transferred to Mrs. Benson; and the time allotted to her having expired, May left the room with a much lighter heart than she had carried into it. The most formidable difficulty to communicating with Sinclair was removed, and she was sanguine enough to believe that all the rest would be easy of accomplishment.

If she had seen the look of triumph on the face of the housekeeper as she left the room, her new hopes would have been dashed to the earth at once. There was an expression of malignant satisfaction in the eyes of Mrs. Benson as she muttered:

"If I am laid up and good-for-nothing, as that creature had the impudence to tell me I was, I've got the means now of puttin' her under my foot, an' I'll do it too. I'll play inter the hands of them lovers an' make 'em think they's a-going straight to the heaven o' matrimony. Miss May shall even get outside the house an' on her way, but she shall find a lion on her path in the shape o' her pa, what 'll bring her back quick enough, an' give me back the confidence he has deposed in that hateful antelope."

—Interloper, I suppose, she meant.

May returned to her captivity with spirits so much lightened that she played with some spirit, and even sang a few songs. She found this pleasant employment than listening to the never-ending tirades of her governess, so she continued at the piano till ten struck upon the alabaster timepiece on the mantelpiece, and Mrs. Black summoned her to retire.

Not the least part of May's penance was being compelled to sleep in the same bed with her disagreeable companion. Mrs. Black was a pink of neatness and order, but that scarcely lessened the disgust with which her young charge lay down by her side. The duenna took the front side of the bed, that she might be made aware of any attempt on the part of her prisoner to leave it, and May lay as far apart from her as possible, revolving schemes of escape, of which none seemed practicable.

It was something gained, she thought, to have won over Mrs. Benson as an ally, and unfortunately she did not dream of the treacherous use the housekeeper designed making of the power the helpless girl had placed in her hands. When Doctor Brandon received the letter that had been entrusted to his keeping, he saw no reason to doubt the housekeeper's good faith, and the two became the medium of communication between the divided lovers.

May's notes were necessarily very brief, for they were written at such moments as she could command, when Mrs. Black's tiresome vigilance relaxed for a brief space. She had inherited artistic taste from her father, and she was allowed to cultivate it during the two hours of daily reading inflicted on her. When she could do no better, she used her pencil and colours to trace a few lines on the paper she surreptitiously placed upon her picture, while the near-sighted eyes of her governess were bent on her book.

Thus the days passed, drearily enough to her, and still no plan had been arranged for her escape. The only recreation she was allowed was a short evening drive, and a promenade of half an hour daily on the long terrace in the rear of the house. Health and hope both began to fail her under this discipline, and Mrs. Black found that she was suffering from a slow fever, which threatened to consume her strength and would probably end in something more serious.

She wished to try her own nostrums on her, but May refused to accept them, and Dr. Brandon was finally called in. He was shocked at the change in her appearance, and reproached the governess for the strictness with which the poor girl was confined to the house. She listened to him coldly, and replied that she did only what she had pledged herself to do, and May was not ill from want of exercise, but from perverse fretting after what could not be allowed to her.

The good doctor prescribed for his patient, spoke a few gentle and encouraging words in her ear as he bent over her, and went away in a passion. He met Sinclair near the gate awaiting his report in much anxiety; after giving it, he gruffly said:

"Jump in, youngster, and while I drive on to town we must settle on some plan to get that poor child away from the stolid wretch who is slowly torturing her to death. I did not think anything could induce me to lend my aid to an elopement, but I shall do it in this case. Thorne is a cruel and hard-hearted father, and there is less excuse for him than for most men who shut up their daughters to keep them from marrying against their will. He ran away with his first wife, he should remember."



"I was not aware that he has been married more than once," said Sinclair, in surprise.

"Oh, it's an old story, and was a terrible scandal. He married some girl when he was regarded as a wandering artist; but his father wouldn't hear of receiving her as his daughter, and his son actually repudiated her, and married May's mother a few months later. They pretended to prove that the first marriage was a mere form, and the girl unworthy to assume the position to which she expected to be elevated, but that was all nonsense. Ada Digby stood by her, and she is one of the noblest women I know. If she were here now, half our difficulties would be over, but she is far away, looking after some motherless children that have been sent to her by an old friend, and we must do the best we can without her."

"With you to aid me, doctor, I shall not feel the want of other assistance. From your account of May, we must get her away from Thornhill as soon as possible, but heretofore we have been unable to hit on a plan of doing so."

"There is but one way to drug that infernal clacking machine up yonder. I believe that woman has talked the child ill, but there isn't much the matter yet. It is only lassitude and depression of spirits that ails her. She will soon get over that when we have her away from that dull old house where she has been shut up so long."

"But how are you to drug Mrs. Black? She is not taking medicine from you."

"That is true, but she is particularly fond of Catawba wine. I have learned from Mrs. Benson, and takes a glass or perhaps more, every evening in place of tea. I shall prepare a bottle for her special use, and I think after she has taken her usual quantity from it, she'll sleep the sleep of the righteous for at least a dozen hours. That will be your opportunity, and of course you must avail yourself of it."

"Dear sir, how shall I find words to thank you for at last consenting to act the part of our good genius. When will you arrange to carry out our programme?"

"As soon as May is able to play her part in it. I whispered a few words to her this morning, which will benefit her more than all the drugs in my pharmacopoeia. This is Monday; on Thursday night I think we may arrange for the flight. I wish I could go with you, but my professional duties forbid it; but Nancy Bean will be ready to accompany her young lady. Thorne will be furious when he learns the part I have taken, but I shall not care for that; he is unworthy to claim such a daughter as May, and I feel that I am doing right in assisting to place her in more humane and honourable hands."

"Thanks, doctor, your confidence in me shall be justified. When May is installed in the pretty home I have prepared for her, you shall visit us, and witness the happiness your kindness will enable us to secure."

The two drove slowly onwards, arranging the plan of the elopement, of which Walter Thorne had already been forewarned by the perfidious housekeeper, and at that very hour he was preparing to travel back to his home, to circumvent the plotters at the moment they thought themselves secure of success. Which would win was uncertain, for the irate father had a tedious journey before him; only a portion of which could be made by rail.

# CHAPTER LXVI.

The few words whispered by Dr. Brandon, and a note he found means to slip into her hand, did more for May than the drops he had left her. In the afternoon she arose and made her toilette; for the first time for days she found herself alone, for Mrs. Black, in the belief that she was securely fastened to her bed for that day at least, had locked the door of the outer room, and availed herself of the opportunity to go out on a tour of inspection, and interfere in every possible manner with the people employed on the place. She was that fearful nuisance, a talkative, meddling woman, and she was determined to make the most of the brief authority she had wrested from the housekeeper.

Thankful for this brief respite from her surveillance, May removed Sinclair's letter from the secret drawer of the cabinet, and collected such clothing as would be indispensable to her, in the event of her flight from Thornhill. These she placed in a deep drawer, which had already been so thoroughly investigated by Mrs. Black that she hoped it would escape farther scrutiny.

Wearied by these efforts, for her strength seemed of late to have deserted her, she threw herself, pale and panting, into a chair beside the open window, and awaited the return of her gaoler. Suddenly a head was raised above the ledge, and the voice of Nancy spoke in subdued tones:

"It's me, Miss May; don't be afraid. I saw the

dragon go down to the farm to scare the men a workin' there wi' her clatterin' tongue, an' I hustled up here as fast as I could to tell you that it's all settled. You're to be ready on Thursday night to go along of me to the carriage Mr. Sinclair will have down by the lower gate. He'll come up to the window and help you out, an' I shall be somewhere near, you may be sure. They mean to give Miss Black something in the wine she takes every night at supper. A nice habit that for a woman what has to set a ensample to the misfortunit gals she gits under her thumb. My! but you're lookin' pale and wretched."

"I am not well, but the news you bring me, Nancy, will act as an *elixir vite*. I feel better already. Dr. Brandon hinted this morning that something was to be attempted, but of course, he could not explain. The brief note he left me from Harry told me nothing but that he would never rest till I was safe under his own protection. His plans have been settled to-day, I suppose."

"Yes—till you fell ill the doctor wouldn't do no more than take the letters, but he's got annoyed at the way that woman treats you, an' he's goin' to drug her wine. I run up to the place, begin! I might get a chance to give you a hint. Ain't you got nothin' you'd like me to take care on till you gits out'n the dragon's claws?"

May remembered the letters she was so anxious to save from the inspection of her enemy, and she hastened to take them from the drawer and place them in Nancy's hands, with directions to take them at once to Sinclair for safe-keeping. This was scarcely accomplished, when the sound of the lock turning caused Nancy to dash aside from the window, and May to sink back in the recesses of her chair, trembling and panting for breath.

"You up!" exclaimed Mrs. Black. "I thought you were too ill to leave your bed, or I should not have gone away. Who have you been talking with, for I am sure that I heard someone speaking as I came near the door."

May recovered her composure, and quietly said: "Perhaps I have been talking to myself; it is a habit some people have, and I have been left enough alone to cultivate it."

Mrs. Black suspiciously regarded her, and then said:

"I am sure that the voice was not yours. Let me look out of that window—I wish to ascertain if any one has had the hardihood to approach and communicate with you in my absence."

Certain that by this time Nancy had effected her escape, May arose and said:

"I will retire, not only from the window, but from the room. I have been imprudent in getting up, and I will go back to my bed again."

"You can lie on the sofa, if you please, as I wish you to be present at an investigation I am now competent to make. The secret drawer in the cabinet has been revealed to me by your father, and I am to take out its contents and keep them till he comes himself."

She glanced sharply out of the window as she spoke, but seeing no one lurking near, she took off the scoop-like bonnet in which she had gone out, and prepared for the search she intended to make.

May took possession of the sofa as she coldly said:

"You are welcome to the contents of the drawer, but papa can gain little information from blank paper."

"If I find nothing else I shall be certain that you have availed yourself of my absence to remove the letters that must have been concealed there. If they are not forthcoming, I shall institute another search which, I fancy, will be more successful than the first."

"I hardly think it will, but you can exhaust your superfluous energy as well in that way as in any other."

May watched her with malicious amusement as she sought for the spring, found it, and drew forth the note-paper, which had not been thought worth removing. Every sheet of it was held up to the light, and as carefully investigated as if Mrs. Black expected to find sympathetic writing upon it. Finding herself baffled, she again took possession of May's keys and went on another tour of discovery. Nothing resulted from it, and all her sharp questioning could not draw from her pupil any hint as to the disposal of the letters.

During the next three days May recovered rapidly the hope that had dawned upon her seemed to give her new life, and she looked forward to her release with a thrilling sense of joy that had long been a stranger to her heart.

The last week in August had come, and a heavy storm burst over Thornhill on the appointed day, but her courage did not falter, nor her determination to join her lover at all hazards fail her for a single moment.

On this last day she dreaded the shrewd observation of her guardian, and she availed herself of the advice Nancy had once given her to purloin Mrs. Black's spectacles. When that lady arose in the morning they were put on before she could accomplish anything, for she was so shortsighted that she could not distinguish objects across the room without them.

On the previous night, after she had laid them aside, May managed to gain possession of them, and after the duenna was asleep, she broke the glasses, and threw the gold frames upon the carpet at the foot of the bed. Laughing at her exploit, she then demurely composed herself to sleep.

The anger and dismay of Mrs. Black when she awoke and searched for her spectacles in vain, afforded her victim intense amusement, though she lay perfectly still and feigned to be asleep. May was presently shaken violently, and an angry face peered closely into her own, while a voice hissed in her ear:

"What have you done with my glasses? for I know that you alone could have removed them."

May rubbed her eyes and pretended to awake suddenly:

"Why are you saying, Mrs. Black? Why do you shake me in this way? I do not like to be treated so unceremoniously."

"I dare say not, but when you have played such a trick upon me as to take my eyes away, I must demand that they shall be restored instantly. I can do nothing without my glasses, as you know."

"Have you really lost them? What can have become of them, for nobody comes into this room after we retire?"

"Therefore, you are responsible for them. Get up and find them for me instantly. They might be under my feet, and I could not see them."

"You may have brushed them down with the bed-clothes as you got out of bed," suggested May good humouredly. "Of course, I will help you to find them, but I beg that you will not accuse me of having misplaced them. I will put on my slippers and institute a search at once."

Mrs. Black commenced groping about the floor, but May was too quick for her; she found the empty frames on the spot upon which she had thrown them, and adroitly removed them beside the stand on which they had been deposited the previous night. She had wrapped the broken pieces of glass in a paper, and concealed them in the sleeve of her gown; they were thrown upon the carpet, and her foot came down upon them with a sudden crash.

"Oh, what a misfortune," she exclaimed. "I have found them, Mrs. Black, beside the table, sure enough; but I was so unfortunate as to step upon them, and they are quite useless."

She held up the empty frames in confirmation of her words, and the face of the angry and excited duenna was brought almost in contact with her own. In a voice choked with wrath, she said:

"Since I have been in this house you have done all that you could to annoy and defy me; but this is the culminating insult. I will never believe that you stepped on them by accident. But the loss of my glasses shall only render me more vigilant, besides, it is one that can easily be repaired; I will go to town immediately after breakfast, taking you with me, and have them replaced."

"I shall be glad to take an airing, but I am afraid the day will prove too inclement. As to my agency in destroying your glasses, I cannot see what I am to gain by doing so. Come, be in a good humour for once, Mrs. Black, for I promise you to be very good to-day. To repay you for the mischief I have done you, I will not be guilty of one thing to annoy you."

A little mollified by the first words of submission she had wrung from her young charge, Mrs. Black stood a moment undecided as to what course she should take, but as she knew by experience that nothing was to be gained by harshness, she finally said:

"Very well, Miss Thorne, we shall see how you conduct yourself. By your behaviour I shall be able to judge of your culpability in this affair. If there be any attempt to take advantage of my imperfect vision, I shall know what steps to take to keep you safe till your father arrives."

"Is my father expected at Thornhill?" asked May, with a sudden sinking of the heart.

"He will be here in a few days, and I am sure that, when he comes, I shall be glad enough to surrender the difficult charge I have undertaken. I thought I should like the life here, but your contumacy is too much for me, and I think I shall resign my situation. Your stepmother may take charge of you, for you will soon have one, it is said."

May made no reply to this piece of information, and Mrs. Black peered disconsolately from the window; for it was raining slowly, and the rising wind gave premonition of the storm which came on in wild fury at a later hour of the day.



[ENGLAND ONCE MORE.]

As May had promised, she was very tractable and polite on this last day of penance; she listened respectfully to the oral instructions of her governess, and even read aloud two hours herself from that weary history of ancient times. With a natural feeling of triumph she saw that Mrs. Black had fallen asleep in her chair under the infliction, and she softly put the book aside, and began her preparations for departure.

A travelling satchel, that had belonged to her mother, was filled with such things as she had selected to take away with her, and concealed in the closet in her bedroom. She then went back to the sitting-room to find Mrs. Black still enjoying her siesta.

The supper-bell aroused her, and they went out together to the table. A fresh bottle of wine had been uncorked for Mrs. Black, for she declared that tea and coffee prevented her from sleeping, and it was her habit to drink light wine at the evening meal; very soon after it was over she complained of not feeling well, and as soon as they gained the sitting-room she threw herself upon a sofa, and in half an hour was sleeping profoundly.

May collected the few things she intended to take with her, placed her hat and shawl upon the table, and sat down in a tumult of hope and fear, to await the coming of her lover. What if her father should arrive earlier than Mrs. Black had said he would come—if he should arrest her flight and bring her back to her dreary prison? Her heart sunk within her at the mere thought of such an end to her attempt to escape from his authority.

She sat listening to the weary sighing of the wind among the trees, the monotonous patter of the rain-drops, for the storm was dying away, and the moon was making feeble efforts to struggle through the clouds that obscured her light. Ten o'clock was the hour appointed for her escape, and the lonely and excited girl thought it would never roll round. The hands on the clock seemed scarcely to move, and as the time passed, her agitation became almost uncontrollable.

Mrs. Black slept on, and as the night grew cool, May brought a shawl and spread it over her; for little as she liked her, she did not wish any evil to result to her from the trick that had been played on her.

A few moments later something was thrown against the window, and she saw a tall form standing outside, wrapped in a heavy cloak, with his hat slouched over his face. With a faint cry, May sprang forward and threw up the sash; the man vaulted lightly into the room, and the overwrought

girl uttered a faint cry of alarm, and sunk senseless at his feet.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

A FOREIGN steamer was entering the port of Portsmouth, and as she moved gracefully onward the excited passengers gathered in groups upon the deck—some gazing upon the unknown land in which they hoped to find peace and plenty; others, with swelling hearts and dewy eyes welcoming again the sight of father-land—of home, with all its tender ties and sweet associations.

But among them was one who came back almost as a stranger to her native shores. The unformed and inexperienced girl, who left them seventeen years before, with a heart half-broken by the desertion of the one she loved, had little in common with the mature woman who gazed out on the beautiful bay with sad eyes and weary heart. But that sorrow had been buried long ago, and over its grave had grown rank tares of cherished vengeance, which had been carefully nourished, and they were now ready to bring forth their bitter fruit.

The passage of these years had wrought a wonderful metamorphosis in the uncultured country girl: they had given her grace, accomplishments, knowledge of the world, and emptiness of heart, for she stood alone in the Babel of life around her, with few sympathies in common with her kind. The early wrong she had suffered had killed the life of her soul, and she cherished now but one absorbing desire—to repay the man who had desolated her young life in the same coin he had dealt out to her.

This purpose had brought Claire back to the land of her birth, and any one who looked at her as she leaned against the bulwarks, and looked out with a vague and yearning expression of sadness on her expressive face, would have comprehended that she was a formidable antagonist to encounter in any game of hearts she wished to play successfully.

Claire was thirty-two years of age, yet few would have believed that over that fair head more than twenty-three summers had passed. Her lithe and graceful form, though perfectly rounded, possessed a latent strength of nerve and muscle, not often found among women in her class of life, and a power of endurance which the refined delicacy of her appearance would not have suggested.

She herself declared that the iron in her blood had hardened into steel by the pressure brought to bear upon her nature during the years in which her character was receiving its impress for good or evil. She was now a perfectly developed woman, who felt

her own power to accomplish whatever she undertook, and was to him against whom that power was to be used, for she was merciless in the purpose which had brought her back over the wide sea, to bring Walter Thorne to an account for the treachery which had blighted her opening life.

Her beautiful face, so brilliant with animation in the social circle, was now clouded and sad enough to make one believe that this protean creature could feel deeply and truly, if the right cord were touched; but of that there was little hope in the destiny she was hastening to embrace.

She wore a dark travelling dress of soft material that flowed to her feet in dainty folds, showing the graceful curves of her form, for it was in the days before hoops were worn that this Nemesis came on her vengeful mission to the land of her birth. Plain linen collar and cuffs, and a closely-fitting bonnet with a long veil floating from it, completed her simple toilette. She had taken off one of her neatly-fitting gloves, and the hand that grasped the fluttering folds of her veil, though shapely and fair, had a nervous power in its long, slender fingers which was also characteristic. This woman understood herself; she had matured her plans, and she meant to carry them out, cost what it might to herself or others.

(To be continued.)

THE marriage contract of Louis XVI. with Marie Antoinette, with all the signatures of witnesses, was this week sold for the extraordinary sum of five francs at the Hôtel Drouot.

VALUE OF THE RUBY.—We generally speak of the diamond as the most valuable of gems, but this is not really the case. The ruby is the most valuable, but it depends for its rarity upon its colour. The ruby is the next hardest thing to the diamond. It is found principally in the East. Siam, Ava, and Ceylon afford the most plentiful supplies. In Burmah the finding of one of these jewels is made a state event; the grandees of the empire go out to meet it, with elephants and all the grandeur of Eastern state. There are many shades of red, but the hue most approved of, and commanding the highest price, is that of the "pigeon's blood." The King of Burmah, one of whose titles is that of Lord of the Rubies, has one the size of a pigeon's egg. The value of these gems goes on increasing at a much higher rate than that of the diamond. When its weight is as much as four carats, its value varies from four hundred to five hundred and fifty pounds, a sum more than double that of a diamond of the same weight.





[LAURETTA'S PERIL.]

## THE FLOWER GIRL.

## CHAPTER VII.

We must return to Lauretta, whom we left struggling in the ruffianly arms of her captors.

Sir Simon did not carry her himself, for he considered such labour beneath one of his rank, nor was he willing to put himself out of breath by the exertion.

His confederates, like himself, were masked, and one of them bore the almost unconscious maiden in his brawny arms, while Sir Simon led the way to the entrance of a dark alley, several squares distant from the place of capture.

Here he dismissed all his ruffians, except him who carried Lauretta, and bidding him follow, soon halted and felt for his dagger to strike against a door.

"Fiend take my fortune," he said, angrily. "I have dropped my dagger, and if Caxton finds it he will suspect my hand in this matter. Give me the girl, Orgill, and hurry back for the dagger. A golden crown for you if you find it."

The man placed Lauretta in Sir Simon's arms, and hurried away to regain the dagger, while the baronet kicked sharply against the door.

He must have been very familiar with the locality, for it had become very dark, and there was much need of the lamp borne by one who opened the door, in response to the summons.

It was a very dark ugly head, though that of a woman, as it seemed from the garb, and the shrill voice which issued from its skinny lips—the head of a skeleton, with a sickly, yellow skin drawn tightly over the bony face.

"Now, now! What's here? Who comes?"

"Death's Head, give way," replied Sir Simon, trying to force the door wide open with his knee.

"Hoot!" said the woman, with a sputter from her toothless gums, while she held the door hard and fast. "You are very fast, my gay lark! 'Give way Death's Head,' quotha! I'd have you know that my name is Callisa Staver."

"I am a friend, don't speak my name," said Sir Simon, as with much difficulty he managed to retain his hold on Lauretta, and at the same time to raise his mask.

"Ah, is it you Sir—I mean anybody? Oh, come in then, you are always welcome, my lad," began the woman, but at that moment, Lauretta who was nearly as strong as the effeminate noble, struggled so fiercely that she escaped from his arms.

The mantle was still tied around her head, blind-

folding her, and as she tugged at it to tear it off, the woman put the lamp into Sir Simon's hands, saying: "I'll tame her, my lad." And snatching her up as though Lauretta were an infant, ran up a steep flight of narrow stairs, followed by Sir Simon.

"We'll put her in the cell, if you say so, sir," said the woman, when she reached the top of the stairs.

"No—at least, not yet. Gentle treatment at first."

"Oh, I'll warrant we will tame our little pigeon. Come, we will give her a nice and safe room on the next floor."

Lauretta had made a desperate effort to shake off the grasp of her new enemy, and that effort had told her that the arms and fingers of her who held her were as strong and rigid as bands of steel.

"It is a woman," she thought, as her struggling hands felt a silken robe, "but she has the strength of a man. Heaven help me in my peril. Oh, Mortimer, Mortimer! Heaven send your strong arm quickly to my aid."

She struggled no more, and soon felt that she was placed upon a sofa. She dared not attempt to escape, though she felt that the woman had withdrawn her grasp, for the mantle was still tightly tied round her head.

It was soon taken off, and the sudden glare which met her eyes as it was laid aside, for a moment was blinding and painful.

This soon passed away, and she found herself in an apartment of medium size, and furnished in the most luxurious style of that age. Carpets in that day were exceedingly rare, and seldom found even in the abodes of the wealthiest of the nobility, yet the floor of this room was covered with one of velvet, and the hangings, tapestry, and appointments were of the most costly kind.

Lauretta had never beheld anything that approached such magnificence, yet she scarcely noticed it then, for her eyes glanced about only in search of a chance to escape.

But near her stood Sir Simon, casting off his disguise and revealing that same suit of green and gold, she had so soon learned to dread and detest.

His jester's mask lay upon the carpet, and the many waxen candles burning brilliantly revealed his handsome, yet wicked face, radiant with exultation.

Near Sir Simon, but towering half a head above him, stood the evil woman whose strength had amazed Lauretta, and the excited maiden almost shrieked, as she beheld that horrible face and its bright, protruding eyes—eyes large, gleaming, devilish.

This woman, though clad in silken robes of gaudy hue, was so gaunt in form that there seemed to be

nothing but the bare frame of a skeleton beneath them. She was as tall as the tallest man, high-shouldered, and awkward.

"Oh, you don't like me, my dainty lady," said the spectre, as she rightly construed the expression upon the face of the captive. "But after a time you will ask me for favours."

Here she was seized with a fit of coughing, so deep and sepulchral in its tone that Lauretta shuddered, so dreadful was the sound, so fearful the contortions of the hideous face and repulsive form.

"Do not mind what she says," said Sir Simon, approaching Lauretta with a patronizing smile. "I am your protector and friend."

But Lauretta sprang to her feet, and ran to a corner, dragging a heavy table between her and Sir Simon, exclaiming:

"Heaven save me from your protection, Sir Simon Vagram! Do not approach me, sir, or you may find anything but friendship in my greeting."

As she said this, she snatched up a heavy lamp and hurled it with so true an aim and such desperate force that the effeminate knight was laid prostrate upon the carpet.

The missile struck him on the breast, and ere he could cry "heaven bless me!" he was at full length on the floor.

"Spiteful girl!" cried Callisa, as she rushed toward Lauretta. "The cell is the place for you."

She advanced with enormous strides, and three would have taken her to the table behind which Lauretta had so quickly intrenched herself. But Lauretta knew all would be lost if those spider-like arms were again cast around her. With rapid decision she snatched up the other lamp, and hurled it with all her force at the face of the hideous wretch.

The missile flew truly to its mark, struck full upon the ghastly nose and jaws, and Callisa fell staggering backwards, bruised, bleeding, and howling.

Sir Simon by this time had regained his feet, and as he did so he drew his sword.

"Ah, coward," cried Lauretta. "You draw your sword! Wilt stab me to the heart, Sir Simon! I prefer death a thousand times to your insults."

"I draw my sword to save your life, my charmer," replied the knight, as he turned his back upon Lauretta and faced the enraged Callisa, who was now upon her feet raving for revenge.

"Stand back, woman!" said Sir Simon, as he brandished his blade in her face. "You shall not lay a finger upon the maiden in anger. I did not bring her here to be injured."

To the great amazement of Lauretta, the fury of the powerful woman instantly changed to the most

abject terror. The glare of the steel seemed to cow her fierce anger like magic. She returned to the door of the apartment in great haste, and when there snarled out:

"Very well, very well! And I am to be mangled by your wild cat, Sir Simon. Now do you take her right out of the house, for as I live I mean to make her pay for the blow."

At this moment the door was opened by Orgill, who had recovered and returned with the dagger lost by Sir Simon. Orgill held the dagger in his hand, raised somewhat in exultation over his success, and as Callisa saw the gleaming blade so near her, she uttered a cry of terror and fled to the most remote corner of the room, trembling and crouching.

"Give me the dagger, Orgill," said Sir Simon, and having received it, he laid it upon the table before Lauretta, adding: "Never fear Callisa while you can wield that. Here is the sheath. She has a ridiculous fear of steel in any shape—a bodkin will put her to flight. She says it was foretold of her that steel would finally put an end to her precious life. A ton of gold, much as she loves it, could not tempt her to face cold steel."

Lauretta gladly took the dagger, and resolved to use it against Sir Simon, should he dare to insult her by his touch.

"You see that I am your friend, and mean no harm," he said, in his most winning tone. "Indeed I love you madly."

"If you love me, then set me at liberty, Sir Simon."

"Get you forth, Orgill, and you, too, Callisa. I wish to speak alone with the lady. No words to me, woman," he added, sternly, as Callisa began to murmur. "For your battered face I will pay you well. Get you gone, and I will have speech with you ere long."

Lauretta saw Orgill and Callisa depart with renewed dread. True, she could not hope for aid from either, for both were the willing slaves of the lawless knight; yet, even their evil presence seemed a kind of protection.

She had concealed the dagger in the folds of her dress, and her grasp grew firm upon its hilt as she saw Sir Simon turn the key in the lock, and return towards her.

He was not afraid of steel, or he would not have armed her hand. It was plain that he regarded her strength and resolution with contempt, or perhaps, he meditated no violence. She could not doubt but that it was his intention to keep her a prisoner, or he would not have armed her against the rage and malice of that horrible woman.

But Sir Simon approached the table with an air full of respect, saying:

"Young lady, I do not so much as know your name. I only know that my love for you has made me appear cruel, and, perhaps, even brutal in your eyes."

"Sir Simon Vagram," interrupted Lauretta, quickly, "you can play the part of a noble gentleman, if you will. I do not love you, and even if I did, I would not stoop to be less than your lawful wife."

"My wife?"

"No less, sir," she replied, with queenly haughtiness. "A better, handsomer, braver, nobler man than Sir Simon Vagram may hope ever to be, has asked me to be his wife. Ah, you base-hearted nobles of the court think a maiden who is poor and nameless can have no higher aspiration than to be your toys."

"Stay! Who is that very extraordinary personage who is so noble, so handsome, so brave?" asked Sir Simon, with a sneer, which did not make his face at all fascinating. "Is it that tall lout in black velvet, who sported a pair of golden spurs, which, I doubt not, the knave stole, to pass himself off as a knight?"

"I think he understands the use of his sword, Sir Simon," retorted Lauretta.

"Bah! A trick of the wrist. Some sword juggler," said he, contemptuously. "Yet he hath an unseemly importance in my eyes, since he has had the fortune to catch the eye of a flower girl."

Lauretta blushed with shame as she heard this taunt, for it proved that Sir Simon doubted her modesty, and she replied quickly:

"I never was a flower girl until this morning, and that you may learn from Sibilla Thornbuck."

"Who? The sorceress? Do you know her?"

"I know that she is vile, base, and wicked, but she will tell you that she forced me into that booth where my ill-fortune it was to be seen by you."

"And my rare good fortune," exclaimed Sir Simon. "I disguised and sallied forth, hoping to meet with some pleasant adventure, but never dreaming that a rose of such exquisite loveliness as your charming self was blooming for me. Ah, lovely lady," added he, sinking affectedly upon one knee,

and pressing his hands upon his bosom, "of all the flowers that decked the flower booth you adorned, there was not one so superbly beautiful as yourself. Rose not lily, pink, daffodil nor marigold—none but that had lost its beauty to you, their queen."

Sir Simon had great faith in the efficacy of rhapsodies like this, having tried them with wonderful success upon the fair and silly ladies of the court and city. He was quite flushed, therefore, when, after all his graceful words and gestures, his rolling of his eyes, and winking of smiles, Lauretta laughed outright, so ludicrous was the exhibition.

She had never seen before a court gallant in the agony of a declaration of love, and to her the affair was like a comedy or a farce.

Sir Simon grew red with rage, for little minds are keen to resent ridicule. He sprang to his feet, and Lauretta was amazed to see how readily his smiling features changed their expression to one of vindictive anger.

"Ah, he has a cruel heart," she thought, as she marked his dark scowl. "He can smile like an angel, but he has the heart of a wolf."

"You laugh, young lady," he said, in a low tone, as if half stifled with rage. "You may shed tears ere long," and having said this, he abruptly left the room.

Lauretta was a girl of great quickness of decision and promptness of action. Though greatly surprised by the manner of Sir Simon, who seemed so suddenly from gallantry to ferocity, no sooner was the door closed after him than she pushed the table aside, and ran to scan the entrance.

A rapid glance around had informed her that there was but one door, and as she heard that made fast by Sir Simon without, she looked about for some means by which her foes might be kept out, for she feared their speedy return.

To her joy she found that the limbs of the door were provided with strong iron staples, through which a bar might be passed, and all entrance effectually shut out, unless great violence should be used.

There was neither, however, and as her enemies might return at any moment, haste was imperative. She knew that the dagger she had could be used through one of the staples, but the blade was slender and doubtless very brittle, and beside she might need it for future protection. Should it be broken, she would be at the mercy of Callisa, as well as unarmed against the feared violence of Sir Simon.

As she glanced about her eyes fell upon the lamps which had already been of such signal use to her, and stooping quickly she picked up one of them.

It was made of bronze, with a long, solid shaft, and as she examined it she found that the foot could be easily unscrewed from the shaft.

This being done, she forced the shaft, which was more than a foot in length, through the bolt-socket above the lock, and as the door was hung to open inwards, the shaft had to be either broken or dislodged to effect an entrance. Either was impossible until a panel of the strong oaken door should first be beaten in.

"At least I cannot be taken by surprise if I am forced to yield to fatigue and sleep," thought the resolute girl. "I am sure Sir Mortimer will seek all over London for me when he hears from Master Caxton of my misfortune."

It then occurred to her that there might be some other means of entrance, and she began a careful examination of the apartment.

Taking one of the wax candles from one of the chandeliers, she raised the heavy tapestry with which the walls were hung, and passing beneath it, looked carefully at the oaken planks.

The dust of ages seemed to have accumulated beneath the tapestry, and Lauretta discovered that the inner tapestry was old and moth-eaten; that which was alone visible to anyone in the apartment being fresh and new, and hung over the old and faded one.

In making the circuit of the room behind the tapestry, she at length found herself at the back of the splendid couch which stood in one quarter of the apartment, and distant about two feet from the tapestry.

It was there that she saw something which drove her heart to her throat at a single bound. Cunningly fabricated in the oaken wall was a secret door.

Lauretta placed her hand upon a tiny brazen knob and pushed, first gently, and then with all her strength against it. But neither the knob nor the door yielded a hair's breadth. Both seemed as immovable as the wall itself.

"It is made fast on the other side," thought Lauretta, nearly sinking with despair. "Ah, it is a secret entrance. There is no dust upon the tapestry here. I am lost! I cannot make fast this narrow door, for I know not how it is opened. There are no hinges to be seen, and the little knob is in the centre of the door. I am lost, unless Mortimer speedily rescues me. In time I must yield to fatigue—I must

sleep; my fears will keep me awake long after exhausted nature demands repose; and when, at length, I sink into slumber, I shall sleep as profoundly as if I had swallowed opium. Ah, these wretches are experienced in their villainy. They can tell to a minute how long their helpless victims can remain awake."

A noise at the door, which she had barred, alarmed her, and she hurried from behind the tapestry, fearing lest it might be discovered that she had stumbled upon a knowledge of the secret entrance.

Hastening from the vicinity of the bed, she replaced the candle in the chandelier, and seated herself in a chair near the door, so that she might be plainly seen by any eye peeping through the key-hole.

"Ah, you are fastened in!" cried a voice without, which Lauretta recognized with a shudder.

It was not the voice of Callisa, but that of Sibilla the sorceress.

## CHAPTER VIII.

LAURETTA had expected to hear the soft tones of Sir Simon, somewhat raised in surprise or anger, or the harsh, shrill voice of the villainous Callisa, but as she recognized the terrible voice of the hideous and merciless sorceress, she felt her warm blood grow chill.

That horrible woman had then tracked her even to her prison. Did the fends of darkness and iniquity really aid Sibilla Thornbuck? Could she, as it was whispered by the people, suddenly sneeringly denied by herself, summon and force devils, imps, and ghouls from the regions of the lost, and make them serve her?

She trembled as she thought of these things, and they dashed through her excited and like flaming arrows, scorching and bewildering her brain as they darted rapidly through her mind.

She made no reply. She dared not, for the moment, to raise her voice, though her beautiful lips were pale and open with terror.

Callisa was a coward. Sir Simon had told Lauretta that, and she had seen proofs of the assertion. Callisa, fierce, formidable, horrible as she was, would fly from the gleam of steel. Against her, thanks to Sir Simon, Lauretta was armed; but Sibilla Thornbuck feared neither heaven nor man, and consorted with devils.

Lauretta trembled and listened to hear more. Would the sorceress break open the door and pounce upon her to exact swift satisfaction for hate, rage, and malice? Or would she be held back by Sir Simon, who doubtless was there?

"Ho!" cried Sibilla, thumping the door with her fists, "you are a sly one, a bold one, a dainty bit, by my four bones you are! Will let me in, my pretty, pretty dear? I long to kiss you, runaway. Will you please open the door?"

Lauretta knew that the exulting old monster was mocking at her, and therefore made no reply.

She saw the key disappear from the lock, and knew that the sorceress was trying to peep into the room. The light of the chandeliers and polished sconces fell full upon the key-hole, and Lauretta felt a new thrill of horror as she gazed at it.

But not through the key-hole did the sorceress peep. Lauretta heard her tapping smartly upon the centre of the door, and wondered what she was doing, until a circular-shaped piece of wood fell within from the door, leaving an orifice large enough to admit easily the passage of a hand and arm.

"Ha!" cried the sorceress, as she placed her eye at this hole and glared at the maiden, "you see we are prepared for these tricks of our pretty little prisoners. When they are very obstinate and won't let their friends in, we lift up the bars thus."

As she spoke she thrust in her hand and slid it about, as if she expected to find a bar just above the hole.

"Ha! she did not use the bar, Callisa," cried Sibilla.

"It is under the sofa," replied Callisa, whose ugly eye now appeared at the orifice. "I always leave it there for them to hunt and find and be fooled."

"Thank heaven that I did not find it!" thought Lauretta. "If I had I certainly would have used it, and then these harpies could have tossed it from the brackets and attacked me."

"Let me see what the pretty dear has used to bar the door," said the sorceress, after whispering to someone without, and whom Lauretta rightly guessed to be Sir Simon.

The great bloated fist and hairy, painted arm of the sorceress again appeared, clear to the elbow, feeling about for the impediment to entrance.

But only the tips of her fingers would touch, and they failed to grasp the shaft of the lamp, though she struggled hard for several moments.



Lauretta watched her efforts with a wary and resolute eye, and bared her dagger for rapid action should Sibilla succeed in gaining a hold upon the end of the shaft.

"If she does," thought Lauretta, "I will pin her ugly arm to the door. They can but break in, and then I am resolved to die by my own hand rather than yield to Sir Simon."

"She has thrust something that is iron or metal of some kind, through the bar-socket," snarled Sibilla, as she withdrew her hand. "Beat down the door! Here let me throw myself against it. I warrant the shock will drag out the spikes of the staple."

With this the heavy hag sprang with all her strength against the door. The shock seemed to shake the walls, but the fastenings of the stout staple held intact, while the hag for her pains was severely bruised about her shoulder.

"Oh, you pestiferous little wretch!" she screamed, glaring furiously at Lauretta, who had trembled as that great mass of flesh and evil was hurled against the door. "Oh, you pestiferous rebel and runaway! Do you think we can't get our claws on you? Wait, Callisa, get an axe or anything. I will make her drink the dragon."

These last words told Lauretta why they desired to enter. She was to be forced to swallow something, she knew not what; something terrible, no doubt; something devilish, which would deprive her of power to resist any evil which might be intended against her.

Even then it flashed upon her mind that it was very strange her foes did not effect an entrance by means of the secret door, since she had discovered no way by which it might be made fast.

She could imagine, from the suddenness of her arrival in the house, that Callisa, or whoever was proprietor of the unholly premises, had had no time to prepare this apartment for her imprisonment. No doubt had Callisa been warned by Sir Simon there would have been tempting food and sparkling wines, already tampered with and prepared to aid in destroying her senses beyond all power of resistance, and these viands would have been placed here and there in careless profusion, to assail the eye and appetite.

But the apartment was devoid even of ewers of water. No doubt, thought Lauretta, Sir Simon Vagram, finding an easy conquest utterly and unexpectedly impossible, had hastily withdrawn to have food and wine sent in, but had been checked in that intent by her rapid barring of the door.

She was correct in this surmise, and Sir Simon also intended to persuade his beautiful captive to taste what his hideous accomplice, the sorceress, had quickly prepared at his desire. Failing in persuading, he intended to force her to taste, for Sir Simon was not one of those lovers who will sigh for the beloved one's smile when other means, more suited to his perigulous nature, were at hand.

"There is no axe in the house," replied Callisa, to Sibilla's demand for an implement of that kind. "Nor do I like to have any doors battered down and defaced. Why, there is the—"

"Silence!" said Sir Simon, speaking aloud for the first time, though Lauretta had more than suspected that he was with the harpies. "That is to be kept secret."

"Ah," thought Lauretta, whose ears were as vigilant as her eyes, "she was about to speak of the secret door, but Sir Simon does not wish that I shall know of its existence. He fears that if I should know that, I should become desperate and drive this dagger to my heart. And so I will, forgive me heaven, if I find no escape from his cruel pursuit. He knows that Sir Mortimer will be speedy and active in seeking for me, and he desires to compass his ends as soon as he can."

"I have thought of a plan by which we can get in," said Sibilla, "though a few crowns from Sir Simon's purse could repair the damage you fear, you miser—"

"But I tell you," replied Callisa, "there is no axe nor hatchet in my house, and if we send for one it will be asked why we want it, or something else may happen to lead suspicion to my house."

"It is not that," said Sibilla, as she again thrust her head and arm into the hole. "It is because the last time you sent to borrow an axe, it was said, you returned it with blood and human hair upon it. No one will lend you an axe now, and you are too miserly to buy one. If I can get my forefinger upon the end of whatever she has put through the staple, I can push it out."

"Yes, if she will let you," sneered Callisa.

Lauretta watched the bloated fingers of the sorceress as they strove to reach the end of the shaft, and as she saw that they were about to succeed, she sprang forward and struck the keen dagger through the great hairy arm, plunging it to the door.

The sorceress greeted this unexpected assault with

a yell of rage, but dared not attempt to withdraw her arm, lest her wound should be fearfully enlarged. "Ah!" she cried. "She has pinned my arm to the door! Who gave her a dagger? Why did you not tell me that she had one; you death's head vagabond!"

Callisa greatly enjoyed the painful predicament of the sorceress, and had eagerly looked for something of the kind to happen, for she hated while she feared Sibilla Thornbuck. Her face pained her greatly, and she was glad that another should share as much or more.

Lauretta, fearing that Sibilla, in her rage and fury, would twist her arm and snap off the blade, jerked it from the deep hold it had taken in the oaken door, and thus released her prisoner.

The sorceress lost no time in extricating her bleeding arm, and would have glared vengeance through the hole in the door, had not Callisa called out:

"Take care! She may put your eye out! She is no dove, I can tell you."

"Dove! Fiend take her, she is a tigress! But I will get at her, if I have to tear your house down, Callisa Staver."

With that, she again hurled all her weight against the obstinate door, and in vain.

"Come," commanded Sir Simon, in a severe tone, "I shall not allow the girl to be harmed by either of you. Let us retire and leave her to herself. You know it is only a question of time."

"It was you who were so impatient, Sir Simon," snarled Sibilla. "Gads, if I had imagined that it was Lauretta you had caged, I could have told you that it would all be wasted time to try to persuade her to taste anything. The girl is as suspicious as a wild duck. But we must have a talk, Sir Simon, about her. You may be knocking all your father's plans to splinters."

"My father's plans! What care I for his whims, when they oppose my wishes?" demanded he, angrily.

"Choo!" said Sibilla, as she wrapped a bandage around her wounded arm. "You little understand the long head of your father, if you imagine that anything like a whim ever prompts him to do anything. There's something more important than 'you dream of in Roger Vagram's mind, and this Lauretta is—well, I will not say what now, Sir Simon. But the earl would give his little finger to have her safe in De Montfort Palace—mind that!"

"His little finger!" replied Sir Simon, scornfully. "Why, I have twice this day risked my life to have her just where she is. Little finger, indeed! Shame Vagram does not value life, much less fingers, when he loves. Now see to it, Sibilla, that you do not hint to my father that I have the girl, for it was he who planned her capture. I was to take her privately to the De Montfort Palace, but I catch no birds except for Sir Simon."

"Perhaps you may change your mind when you learn more, Sir Simon. Now, until you see the earl, I warn you to avoid the girl; not that I care a straw for her, one way or the other, but because—well, no matter why. You will learn in time. I must see the king to-night, and it is time that I were on my way. Get you to the earl—"

Lauretta heard no more, for the speakers then moved away, leaving her in a maze of wonder at all she had heard.

She sprang to the hole in the door as her enemies moved away, but they were soon beyond her sight, and nothing but darkness remained where they had been.

"Heaven aid me now!" she said. "That dark-faced earl, the father of Sir Simon, desires to have me in his power. Surely he cannot love me, as Sir Simon calls his vile persecution. Love, indeed! Holy angels defend me from their love and their hate—but oh, a thousand times give me their hate rather than their love. I will again examine the secret door. Great heaven! it is plain that Sir Simon intends to make use of it."

Trembling, yet resolute amid all the peril surrounding her, she first replaced the circular piece of wood which had fallen from the door, thinking:

"They shall not have this opening by which to spy at me. If they steal back and force it out again, the noise of its falling will attract my attention."

She then returned to renew her examination of the secret door, not without much fear lest her enemies might have resolved to enter immediately by that means.

With trembling hands and anxious haste, she again pushed and twisted the tiny knob, but in vain. "Oh, heaven aid me!" she exclaimed, throwing up her hands in despair, after repeated failures.

As if heaven had heard and straightway answered her prayer, her sleeve caught upon the brazen knob, drawing upwards upon it with considerable and sudden force as she threw up her arms. She was instantly

sensible of the resistance, but of a yielding also. For a moment she imagined that the knob had torn her sleeve, but further scrutiny showed that the knob had become slightly elevated from its former distance from the floor, though its position in the centre of the door was unchanged.

Glancing towards the floor she perceived that an opening had appeared at the place where the bottom of the narrow door touched the floor.

This opening was scarcely more than three or four inches in height, though of the exact width of the door.

She perceived immediately that the door could be moved upwards by lifting it by the knob, and on trying it, the door slid noiselessly upwards as if moving in oiled grooves and aided in its ascent by concealed weights and pulleys.

"Ah, it is open," she said, in a breathless whisper of delight, as she steadily raised the door and gazed forward into the darkness beyond. Advancing her candle forward she discovered a narrow ladder leading to a hall, or rather corridor below, so narrow as barely to admit the passage of a single person.

"I must make the attempt," she thought. "I may encounter them on their way to this room; or ere I can escape from the house, but certainly if I remain I shall be lost."

After listening acutely for several moments she descended the ladder, and as she took her hand from the door it descended noiselessly to its former place.

Having descended the ladder, she paused for some time in doubt, not knowing whether to extinguish her candle or not.

If she extinguished it there would be great danger of her meeting with some fall or accident in groping amid pitchy darkness, through secret passages, of which she knew nothing. She might stumble into a pit, or a trap door, or become totally and speedily bewildered.

If she continued to allow her candle to burn, her enemies or their servants might perceive it, and discover her.

The corridor in which she stood was extremely narrow, and stretched so far before her that its termination was lost in impenetrable darkness. Its height barely allowed her to stand erect, and she saw that its top sloped downward, so that, as she advanced, she would be forced to stoop more and more, and perhaps be finally compelled to creep on her hands and knees.

The atmosphere was damp, dense, and stifling, and a shudder thrilled through her frame, as she saw that the floor and walls bore great stains, as if of blood.

Just at the foot of the ladder, where she passed in doubt, there were great dark stains, as if a bleeding body had been cast from the room above, and fallen there in a helpless heap. The shape and appearance of those dark stains, which smeared the floor of the corridor, were undoubtedly such as would be made by dragging a bleeding body over it.

"Someone was murdered in that room," thought Lauretta, "thrown down the ladder, and drawn along here, perhaps, to be finally cast into some pit farther on, or taken secretly and thrown into the Thames. What a place of horror! Let me strive to escape, and with the candle."

Thus resolved, she moved on, being soon compelled to proceed upon her hands and knees. She had not gone far when she reached a spot where the passage branched to the right, and here she paused to reflect upon her further progress.

"I will try this one," she said, as she entered one leading to the left. "If baffled in any way, I can return and try the other."

After advancing a few feet, she found that she could rise to her feet, and doing so, she gazed about, to find herself in a small, circular-shaped apartment, or rather cell, in the centre of which appeared to be a covered well.

A glance showed her that the dark trail of stains and smears led to this well, and Lauretta, dreading to remove the cover, lest she might discover something revolting and horrible, retreated from the cell.

She was convinced that the body which had stained the floor, from the foot of the ladder to the well, lay ghastly and mouldering at the shiny bottom of the latter.

She now murmured a prayer to heaven for aid and protection, and again moved along the low and narrow passage upon her hands and knees.

A sudden tremor overcame her, the terrible, sickening weakness of despair, and she sank down upon her side, with difficulty holding her candle erect, as the thought flashed upon her mind that there might be no exit from this secret passage, except through the door by which she had entered it.

"Perhaps," she gasped, as this fear seized her heart, "this dreadful corridor was made and is used only as a place to conceal the bodies of the murdered. Perhaps that is the reason why Sir Simon and those

harpies did not use the secret door to enter the room! Perhaps I may not be able to open that door again, and so remain here entombed alive! Great heaven, deliver me!"

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

THE Great Eastern has arrived at Sheerness, whence she will proceed with the cable, probably in the end of next June. After leaving the Medway she will go to Brest to finish coaling, and will thence start on the telegraphic expedition.

A SEAM of blackband ironstone has just been opened up at Middleton Hall, the property of Mr. John Pender. This ironstone, which is 14 in. in thickness, was discovered while boring for coal and shale. The borings, on being analysed, gave 46 per cent. of metallic iron. A pit has just been put down near the "crop," which has turned out very satisfactory. As this seam is new in the ironstone series, it is probable that a search will be made for it in other parts of the county.

NATIVE gold is never free from silver, and frequently contains small quantities of iron, copper, mercury, palladium, platinum, iridium, &c. According to Boussingault, gold from South America contains from 11 per cent. to 85 per cent. of silver, and according to Rose, gold from Siberia and Transylvania, from 4 per cent. to 38 per cent. of silver, and from 0.1 per cent. to 0.4 per cent. of copper and iron. Henry, Teschemacher, Oswald, Hofmann, and Rivot found gold from California to contain from 6 per cent. to 10 per cent. of silver, and Thomas and Kerl found from 3.5 per cent. to 6.9 per cent. of silver in gold from South Australia.

## IS THE ALMOND IDENTICAL WITH THE PEACH?

At the recent meeting of the British Association, Professor Koch read a paper "On the Specific Identity of the Almond and the Peach." The author stated that he had travelled over the mountains of the Caucasus, Armenia, some parts of Persia and Asia Minor, during four years, for the purpose of studying the origin of our fruit trees. Although he could not assert that he had found them perfectly wild or run wild, he nevertheless had collected much interesting material. He believes that our pears and apples, cherries, most prunes, also peaches and apricots, are not natives of Europe. Only certain bad varieties of prunes have their origin from the *Prunus insititia*, the tree which grows in a wild condition in the woods of Europe. After discussing the wild stocks of our cherries and pears, Dr. Koch stated that apricots do not grow wild in Oriental countries, but may, perhaps, come from China and Japan, as also the peaches. In the east of Persia, however, a peach-shrub grows, which is intermediate between the almond and the peach trees. For some time naturalists and gardeners have asserted that there is no difference between almond and peach trees; that the latter is merely a variety in which the dry peel of the almond has become fleshy, and where, at the same time, the stone has acquired a rough surface. Botanists say also that the petioles of the almond tree have at the superior end small glands, which are absent in the peach. But the nectarine, which is but a smoothed peach, exhibits these same glands. The flowers are not readily distinguishable of peach and almond. On the shores of the Rhine a double-flowered variety grows, as to which it is not certainly known whether it is peach or almond. In England and France, also, there is a plant which is well known as the peach-almond, and which is a constant variety. This plant occasionally produces a branch bearing good peaches, but, as a rule, its fruit is intermediate in character. The property of atavism seems to prove the derivation of the peach from the almond; for occasionally a sound peach tree will produce a branch bearing almond-like fruit.

LIGHTNING.—A curious paper has been addressed by Marshal Vaillant to the Academy of Sciences, on the subject of flashes of lightning unaccompanied by thunder. This phenomenon occurred very frequently, the sky being cloudy at the time. Not a drop of rain fell, nor was there a breath of wind, and, strange to say, though thunder had been heard while the clouds were piled up at the horizon, perfect stillness prevailed by the time they had reached the zenith, although lightning was flashing through the darkness in every direction. Marshal Vaillant, after remarking that discharges of atmospheric electricity may take place in three ways, either from a cloud to the earth, or from the earth to the former, or from one cloud to another, says that thunder can rarely be heard except in the two former cases, it being generally much too distant in the latter to catch the ear. At times there may very well be one or more strata of

clouds above those visible to us; but without going higher than eight or ten kilometres, such an altitude would be quite sufficient to prevent our hearing the thunder. It has been ascertained that lightning at Havre may be seen at Paris, the distance being, as the crow flies, about forty-five leagues; but as sound is not propagated so far as light, we see the flashes though we do not hear the peal. Marshal Vaillant cannot understand what is vulgarly called "summer lightning;" its conception is contrary to all known phenomena. He considers it to be, not a mere consequence of heat, but the discharge of electricity from very small clouds, which their distance renders invisible to us, though we perceive the sheet of electricity they exchange between each other. Marshal Vaillant is farther confirmed in this opinion by the fact, that very soon after "summer lightning" has been observed after a very hot day, large clouds generally appear in the sky with great suddenness.

THE "DUMMY" COPPER BOLTS.—A paragraph went the round of the papers a short time ago stating that on breaking up the Sepoy, a vessel built for Government by contract, it was found that her copper bolts were dummies, being only a few inches long. As we (*United Service Gazette*) hear of no inquiry having been instituted into the matter, nor that the officer whose duty it was to prevent such a fraud has been called to account, we can only conclude that the paragraph in question had no foundation in fact, and was merely foisted on the public with a view to raise the credit of a department which for a very long time has been at a very heavy discount. If such a trick had been played, it would have been nothing less than a nefarious fraud, and the Admiralty, knowing, as they must do, who the culprits were, were bound, in the public interest, to bring them publicly to disgrace and punishment.

## STATISTICS.

POSTAL STATISTICS OF ITALY.—The following statistics of the receipts of the Post-office during the first-half of the present year, as compared with that of 1867, is taken from the official returns just published by the General Director of the Italian Post-office:—Letters posted, 1868, 11,056,737; 1867, 40,746,626. Newspapers and periodicals, 1868, 29,029,021; 1867, 26,937,839. Other printed matter, 1868, 4,913,210; 1867, 4,480,442. Free correspondence, postal service, &c., 1868, 14,874,103; 1867, 14,799,665. Post-office orders issued, 1868, 71,739,539; 1867, 59,623,838. Total receipt of Post-office, 1868, 7,734,666,781; 1867, 7,430,286,451.

## AGRICULTURAL RETURNS OF GREAT BRITAIN FOR 1868.

It has not been practicable to obtain from all parts of England and Wales the information necessary for the completion of the agricultural returns for this year until the present date. With the view of making known, as early as possible, the chief results exhibited by the returns, the following particulars are furnished in anticipation of the publication of the returns in detail.

### EXTENT OF LAND IN GREAT BRITAIN UNDER:

	Wheat.	Barley.	Oats.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1866 ...	3,350,394	2,237,329	2,759,923
1867 ...	3,367,876	2,259,164	2,750,487
1868 ...	3,646,260	2,149,201	2,753,240
1868 over ...	Increase.	Decrease.	Increase.
1867 over ...	278,384	109,963	2,758
1867 or 8.2 p.c. ...	or 8.2 p.c.	or 4.9 p.c.	or 0.1 p.c.
1868 over ...	Increase.	Decrease.	Decrease.
1867 over ...	295,866	88,128	6,633
1866 or 8.6 p.c. ...	or 8.6 p.c.	or 4.0 p.c.	or 0.3 p.c.

### TOTAL NUMBER OF LIVE STOCK IN GREAT BRITAIN ON JUNE 25.

	Cattle.	Sheep.	Pigs.
1867 ...	4,993,034	28,919,101	2,966,979
1868 ...	5,416,154	30,685,980	2,303,857
1868 over ...	Increase.	Increase.	Decrease.
1867 over ...	423,120	1,766,879	663,122
1867 or 8.6 p.c. ...	or 8.6 p.c.	or 6.1 p.c.	or 22.3 p.c.

The acreage of land in Great Britain under potatoes in 1868 was 539,954, against 492,217 in 1867, and 498,843 in 1866.

The acreage under hops in 1868 was 64,488, against 64,284 in 1867, and 56,578 in 1866.

Statistical Department, Board of Trade, Sept. 23, 1868.

A YEAR'S JURIES.—In the year 1867 there were 24,648 coroners' inquests held in England and Wales; 18,012 prisoners were tried before juries; 2,960 causes were tried in the superior courts of common law—viz., 1,553 in London and Westminster, and 1,407 on circuit; 50 causes were tried

before juries in the Probate and Divorce Courts; 856 causes were tried before juries in the county courts, and 843 in the Lord Mayor's Court and other local courts. The list is probably not quite complete, but it shows that 47,869 cases were tried before juries in the year, averaging more than 150 for every working day in the year. This is a heavy tax upon the time of jurymen. Those who think it, to a certain extent, at least, an unnecessary tax, may feel an interest in some farther official returns, which show that in the county courts 542,560 causes were determined in the year, but only 856 of them were tried before a jury; and the year's returns from borough, hundred, and manorial courts show 6,908 cases determined without a jury, and only 483 with a jury. In the three superior courts of common law 48 juries had to be discharged in the year without agreeing upon a verdict—21 in London and Middlesex, and 11 on circuit.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PRESERVING PEARS.—No variety is better than the Catillac, but several other varieties are as good for the purpose. The pears should not be more than ripe. They are in a fit state as soon as the pips are black. Set the pears on the fire, with sufficient water to cover them; take them off when quite soft, and put them into cold water; pare them lightly, cut off the stalks, prick each with a pin sufficiently long to reach the core, and put them again in cold water with a little alum; set them on the fire to boil until the pears are tender, then take them out, and put them in cold water for the third time. Clarify and boil some sugar, put some water to it, and when it boils add the pears, cover the pan, and give the whole a boil; skim, pour it into an earthen pan, and leave it. The next day drain the syrup from the pears, add a little more clarified sugar to it, and boil it again; pour it over the fruit, and leave it as before. The next and two successive days proceed in the same way, each time decreasing the degree of boiling; then add the pears, give the preserve a boil (covered), skim and pour it into a pan, place in a stove for two days, then drain the fruit and put it by for use.

MATERIAL FOR TYING PLANTS.—The drop wears away the stone in a far larger sense than is usually accepted with this trite saying. Petty cares often help to wear away the soul, and petty details occupy much of the life. Small, indeed, then, must be that which we can call beneath our notice. The tying of plants, of fruit trees, of anything and everything in a garden is not often a conspicuous effort; but it occupies, on the whole, a great deal of time, even in small places. In larger ones operations of this kind often occupy several men for weeks at a time. The material usually employed with us is bass matting, and in most large gardens a number of bass mats are annually cut up and used for this purpose. Of late years they have troubled in price, and are now, if we mistake not, bought at about half-a-crown each. There is the labour of cutting them into shreds, and selecting the best strings for tying, and then, after all a perfect and a cheap material is not the result. Each shred has to be twisted before it is used. The expense may be done away with and a much better material secured, by simply planting a few tufts of the common glaucous rush (*Juncus glaucus*) in some moist spot, or, where much tying is to be done, a few dozen tufts. The stems of this plant are smooth and ready to use at any moment, and are suited for every kind of tying, except the strong or "mother branches" of fruit trees (for which twigs of the yellow osier should be used) and the finest and youngest shoots of hothouse plants. The rush may be cut green and used out of hand, or it may be cut for winter use in a dried state. When used in winter it is desirable to steep it in water a couple of hours before being used, so as to ensure the requisite flexibility. It forms a neat and lasting tie, and is not knotted as the matting, but simply twisted, then pinched off with the nail or cut with the knife, and one of the ends turned back a little. For tying the young shoots of fruit trees to an espalier it is admirable, as it is for most other purposes of training and tying. When men are used to it they work with greater facility with it than with anything else. When green it is a matter of no trouble for a horny hand to pinch it instead of cutting it off; thus the workman has not the trouble of using a knife and has both hands free.

In a case heard at the Westminster Police-court recently, Mr. Selfe stated that if a person encouraged street-musicians to play, after they had been ordered by another to leave a particular locality, he or she was liable to be prosecuted and fined, equally with the street-players.





[LARCHMONT HIDING THE BOX.]

## HIDDEN AT NIGHT.

## CHAPTER I.

THE moon struggled through masses of dark clouds, tinting their edges with silver. The wind sighed fitfully, and the ocean heaved with a sullen swell, thundering upon the beach with a dull mournful sound. All nature seemed to give evidence of a coming tempest. The village clock had struck the hour of twelve. A man standing on the edge of the cliff appeared to be the only human creature abroad. He bared his brow to the refreshing sea-breeze as if his brain were hot and wearied. Then he glanced cautiously around. At his back was the elegant little cottage which was known thereabouts as the Larchmont Place. To the left lay the houses of the fishermen, far beneath, skirting the one straggling street that ran between the rugged highlands and the beach. Not a light was visible—the inmates were looked in slumber.

Out in the bay many lights glimmered, rising and falling with the tide. They were the lanterns suspended to the fishing vessels there. One vessel bore a red light conspicuously among the yellow ones. It signaled the yacht *Alert*, belonging to Jasper Sabin, who, with his friend, Hugh Truhart, was even then asleep in Larchmont Cottage. They had sailed down to S— to celebrate Arana Larchmont's birthday. These vessels lay near the great pathway of navigation, and the lanterns gave notice of their vicinity.

"All hushed—all still," murmured the lone man on the cliff. "But one light in the cottage. It comes from Arana's window. The romantic fancy of the girl. She keeps it burning all night, as a beacon to warn the storm-tossed mariner from these treacherous rocks. She considers it a holy duty, as wrecks are so prevalent on this coast." He shuddered, and drew his coat closely around him, but

something concealed beneath the left breast protruded, like some strange deformity. "To-morrow," he resumed, communing with his thoughts, "she will be of legal age, and I must account for my long guardianship. These must be securely hidden. I dare not destroy them—I dare not keep them with me, for fear of some unforeseen accident which might lead to their discovery; and that would be ruin—worse, shame! Let me bury them here among the rocks, and mark the place."

He moved cautiously along the cliff, descending into a little cavity, some ten feet below the edge of the precipice. It was not a path to the beach—only a hollow in the cliff that went no farther. In this he was concealed from any observation from the land; the lights at sea were full in view, but, at that distance, no one on board those vessels could distinguish him from the shadows of the cliff.

"This will do admirably," he said, as he drew a small japanned tin box from under his coat, and placed it beside him. Then taking out his pocket-knife, he opened the large blade and began to make an excavation in the soil.

Whilst thus employed a pebble rolled from the cliff above, struck resoundingly upon the tin box, and bounded into the sea. The man started to his feet guiltily, whilst a cold perspiration exuded from his brow, his heart throbbed painfully, and he trembled in every limb. Had that pebble been displaced by the foot of a watcher? Was he discovered? For a moment he paused in indecision, then hastily scrambled up the cliff, the knife open in his hand, and a deadly purpose in his heart.

Gaining the cliff's brow, he glanced eagerly around. No living soul in sight. The light burned brightly in Arana's window, but no shadow crossed its radiant little pathway. He listened with every sense acute; no sound but the sighing of the wind among the trees—the monotone of the waves upon the beach.

"Fool that I am!" he muttered. "My own fears deceive me. Who should be abroad at this late hour, and upon my grounds? Some animal, or the wind, perhaps, displaced the stone. Let me complete my task."

He descended once more into the cavity. His nerves were sadly discomposed by this little incident, and he interrupted his labour repeatedly to raise his head and listen; but no fresh cause of alarm disturbed him, and at last, as the village clock struck the hour of one, the box was safely buried. He re-ascended the cliff, and took another careful survey of the surrounding objects; all was still—no human soul in sight. The lights danced up and down in the offing, and Arana's beacon-lamp gave forth an answering signal.

"Curse the light!" he murmured; "it seems to be an angel's eye reproaching me for what I have done. But there was no other way—no other way!"

Silently, stealthily, he walked towards the cottage, re-entered it, sought his chamber, and went to bed. He would not have rested so quietly, had he known what transpired ten minutes after he had left the cliff. A huge head rose slowly from a hollow, took a careful survey of the scene, and then the body followed; upon all-fours the strange form moved slowly, with snake-like sinuosity, towards the verge of the cliff, reached it, descended into the cavity, and stood erect, with a weird kind of chuckle. Then you perceived it was a man. A strange, unnatural kind of man, with a large head, covered with masses of unkempt hair of the colour and consistency of tow; with bare arms and legs, sinewy with muscle, and a brawny chest. A young Hercules in a fisherman's dress.

With his strong fingers and claw-like nails he tore up the earth rapidly and unearthed the box, thrust it into the bosom of his coarse shirt, and carefully replaced the earth again. Then ascending to the cliff's brow, he dropped upon all-fours, gave one wistful look at the light burning in Arana's window, and crawled away into the gloom, like a wild beast bearing off its prey.

## CHAPTER II.

THE next morning after breakfast Jasper Sabin and Hugh Truhart sat upon the veranda of Larchmont Cottage, smoking their cigars and enjoying the lovely sea view that was spread out before them.

There was a great dissimilarity in the two friends, for such they had been for years—playfellows in childhood, fellow students at college—and the dissimilarity was as great in their fortunes as in their appearance. Jasper Sabin was light, with auburn hair, blue eyes, and a sandy moustache and whisker, worn in the extravagant, Dundreary style. He was the only son of the rich John Sabin, head of the great firm of Sabin and Co., dealers in hardware. Jasper was the junior partner, but he paid very little attention to business, his time being principally devoted to fast horses, fast yachts, and fast living generally.

Hugh Truhart was dark, with chestnut hair and hazel eyes. He wore no beard at all, and that fact, joined to his fair complexion, which was as clear as a woman's, gave him rather a youthful appearance; yet he was about the same age as Jasper—that is to say, in the vicinity of twenty-five. His parents were in easy circumstances, but by no means rich. His business was that of a designer and engraver upon wood, and he had already acquired the reputation of a skilful artist.

The paths of life of Jasper Sabin and Hugh Truhart had been widely apart of late years, but a casual meeting in the street had renewed the old intimacy, and Hugh had accepted an invitation from his friend to take a cruise in his yacht during the summer solstice. The first part of the cruise consisted in sailing to S— Bay, and anchoring off the village and the rugged headland on which Larchmont Cottage was situated, to celebrate Arana Larchmont's birthday, whom Jasper was anxious to present to his friend as the future partner of his joys and hopes. They had arrived the previous afternoon, taking tea and passing the night at the cottage.

"Well," said Jasper, lazily puffing a thin stream of smoke from his lips, as he held his cigar daintily between his thumb and fore-finger, "you have seen her—what do you think of her?"

"Beautiful!" ejaculated Hugh, his eye kindling with an artist's fervour. "I do not say it to please you, Jasper, but I consider Arana the most lovely girl I ever beheld. Her features are faultless—classically correct in their contour, reminding one of those Roman maidens famed in story; such an one as Coriolanus selected for his bride."

"A little too majestic, perhaps. Do you know she is as tall as I am, and splendidly developed? If we should happen to have any matrimonial differences, I might come off second best."

"She is large for a woman," acknowledged Hugh; "but then her carriage, though majestic, as you say, is tempered by such a look of innocence of soul and goodness of spirit beaming from her eyes that you would not have her other than she is."

"She is the best dispositioned girl I ever met," affirmed Jasper. "What an eye you artists have for characteristics. You have discovered in one meeting what it took me a month to learn. The fact is, my boy, Arana is a little too placid, too self-poised, too much the same thing always to suit me. Her goodness is everlasting. She is never in a passion, and, as somebody says, somewhere, 'that's not human.' She is as cold as an iceberg. I never kissed her but once, and it had such a refrigerating effect upon me that I never repeated the operation."

"And yet, if I understand aright, you are engaged to be married?"

"Tacitly we are, though we have had no definite arrangement about the matter. The governor and Larchmont arranged the affair between them. I was told to make myself agreeable to Arana, and she, doubtless, was told to regard me as her future lord and master. She seems to like me well enough, and I—well, I have seen some I liked better, but I could not marry them. Money marries money, you know, the world over. Arana is reputed to be very wealthy—I shall find out to-day exactly how much she is worth, for Joshua Larchmont's guardianship expired yesterday. She is also very handsome, and will make an elegant mistress to preside over an elegant house; and what more could a man wish for?"

"What, indeed?" answered Hugh Truhart.

That last remark called up an unpleasant train of reflections.

By the time their cigars were finished they were joined by Arana. She deserved the eulogium which had been bestowed upon her by the young men. Far above the common stature of womanhood, so delicately and exquisitely had nature combined the proportions of her form, that there was nothing awkward or unbecomingly in her appearance. Her dark brown hair was twisted in a braid, above her broad, white forehead, forming a natural coronet. A rosy hue tinted each cheek, relieving the alabaster whiteness of the rest of the face. Her black eyes were large, full, and lustrous. Health and good-nature beamed in every lineament. In the ball-room, out for a drive, at church, one general exclamation followed her: "Splendid." And those who knew her intimately, said Arana Larchmont was as good as she was beautiful.

"Arana," cried Jasper, suddenly, throwing away the stump of his cigar, "what do you say to a visit to the yacht?"

She glanced at the heavens.

"I thought last night," she answered, "that we should have a storm to-day; but it seems to have passed away from us. I will get my hat and shawl, and we will go."

"Don't you think there may be some danger, Miss Larchmont?" suggested Hugh, anxiously. "The storm that passed us last night has spent its fury in our neighbourhood. Look how high the waves run. See the white caps dance in the sunlight. Jasper's boat would be but a cockle-shell among those mad waters."

"Pshaw!" cried Jasper. "Hugh, you are only a freshwater sailor at the best. The yacht lies but half a mile from the shore, and I can row you and Arana there in ten minutes; that is, if you are not afraid to go."

"Afraid!" echoed Hugh, colouring with indignation, as he saw Arana's dark eyes fixed wonderingly upon him. "I am ready to go. I am prepared for emergencies, as I know how to swim."

"That's more than I do," laughed Jasper.

"Or I," said Arana.

"There is no danger," cried Jasper. "Do you think I would ask you to go, Arana, if there were?" he added, tenderly.

It was settled to go. They made the requisite preparations, and then followed the winding path that led from the cottage to the sandy beach below. Hugh escorting Arana, and Jasper following with the oars on his shoulder. Hugh, being a head taller than Jasper, seemed more suited as a cavalier for Arana. She appeared to have some such vague notion herself, for she devoted her attention to him in a manner that would have excited the jealousy of any other man than such an egotist as Jasper Sabin.

While he cast the oars into the boat, Hugh glanced anxiously over the yeasty waves that came tumbling in tumultuously at their feet. He was not much of a sailor, but he saw that some heavy storm at sea had created a "swell" which might prove dangerous to the little dory in which they were about to embark.

"Jasper," he said, "there is a very heavy sea on."

"Pshaw!" returned Jasper, "it's only a ripple, and going down every minute."

Hugh was silenced, but not satisfied. He again

glanced seaward. A rocky ledge ran out among the frothy waves on the right, being a continuation of the cliff on which Larchmont Cottage was built, and on a large boulder, insulated by the waves from its fellow rocks, was perched something that bore the semblance of humanity.

"What in the world is that?" he cried, pointing out the object to his companions.

"Oh, that is Nep—fishing from the rocks for black fish," answered Arana. "That is his favourite spot—few dare venture there beside himself."

"And who is Nep?" queried Hugh.

"Oh, a fisher-boy—or, I should say, man," explained Jasper; "for he is a giant in size and strength. He supplies the cottage with fish, and follows Arana about like a big dog. If the fellow had brains enough to think of such a thing, I should fancy he was in love with her, and grow proportionately jealous. Only think of my being out by a herculean fisherman!"

"Nonsense!" cried Arana, with heightened colour; "the poor boy is grateful for a few kindnesses I have shown him—that is all."

### CHAPTER III.

JASPER sprang into the boat and shouted:

"All aboard."

Hugh passed Arana in, pushed off the boat, and jumped in himself. The tide was half-flood, and the huge rollers tossed the boat about like an egg-shell. Hugh gave Arana a seat in the stern, whilst Jasper tugged away manfully with both oars to keep the boat from being beached again.

"Shall I take one of the oars, Jasper?" asked Hugh.

"Oh, no," was the answer. "I can pull her out there in no time."

Jasper did not make such headway as he anticipated. Pulling against flood-tide in a troubled sea is hard work, as anyone who has tried it can testify; but Jasper was no novice in the science of rowing, and the boat gradually edged seaward.

The smooth fisherman upon the rock watched their progress with great interest, as they slowly approached him, for it was necessary to round the point upon which he stood to reach the yacht. As the boat came nearer he was plainly visible to the occupants; particularly to Hugh and Arana, who sat astern.

"What a singular-looking creature!" said Hugh.

"Is he crazy?"

"Oh, no," answered Arana. "Though strangely odd and uncommunicative, he seems intelligent enough. In sagacity and good-nature he puts me more in mind of a dog than a man."

"He looks like a modern Colossus of Rhodes," said Jasper, glancing over his shoulder as he bent to the oars.

The fisherman did indeed present a singular appearance, standing astride upon a rock, his coarse trousers rolled up to the knees, the spray dashing over and around his feet and legs, no covering to his brawny chest but a striped shirt, the sleeves torn and fluttering in the wind, and no covering to his head but the matted masses of coarse light hair that nature had furnished him. Holding a pole in his hand, he seemed to be capturing his flimsy prey with great ease and rapidity.

The boat was borne by the wind close to the point, and there, emerging from the kind of cove formed by the bold headland on which Larchmont Cottage stood, it met the full force of the waves beyond, and tossed and rocked fearfully. Arana grew pale and clung instinctively to Hugh. He trembled, not for himself, but for her.

"Jasper," he cried, apprehensively, "there certainly is danger."

"Pshaw!" answered Jasper, lightly, "not the slightest." But he looked very red in the face from his exertions at the oar. "This boat is like a cork—there is no sink to her."

"Let me spell you at the oars; you are fatigued," Jasper's mettle was up, and he would not be relieved.

"We are nearly half way there," he replied, "and I am not weary yet."

He redoubled his exertions, just to prove his words, but that fresh effort was fatal to them, for he "caught a crab"—that is to say (for the benefit of the unaccustomed reader), one of his oars slipped from the rowlock, and he pitched over backwards. At that moment a huge wave came broadside on the boat and capsized it.

The fisherman sprang from the rock into the water the instant the boat upset. When Hugh rose to the surface, and shook the water from his eyes, he saw Arana in the grasp of the fisherman, who was bearing her through the water towards the rock. An oar floated past him, and he seized it. Arana was safe—he breathed a silent prayer of thankfulness—but where

was Jasper? With a shudder he remembered his assertion that he could not swim. At that moment Jasper rose struggling to the surface, scarcely six feet from him. He thrust the oar towards him, and he grasped it with the tenacious clutch of a drowning man. But it would not support them both, and Hugh was obliged to relinquish his hold.

"Swim to the rock," cried a deep voice beside him, and Hugh saw the young giant again battling with the waves. "I will save the gentleman," continued the fisherman, grasping the oar.

Hugh soon gained the rock, a little bruised by the breakers dashing him against its jagged sides, floundered up, and found Arana sitting up and gazing wildly around her. The masses of dark hair, unloosed from their fastening and dripping with water, fell around her like a veil; and this, and her white dress so saturated that it clung closely to her form, gave her the appearance of a naiad just emerged from her ocean home.

"Oh, you are safe!" she cried, a wild joy lighting up her pallid features. "Thank heaven for that!"

Hugh thought it strange that her first thought should be of him, and not of her lover, her affianced husband.

"It was you who saved me," continued Arana; "you who revived me"—she paused, blushing deeply on cheek and brow, and then continued shyly—"with a kiss."

"If Good heavens, no!" cried Hugh, in utter astonishment. "Do you think I would take such a liberty? It was Nep, the uncouth fisherman, who saved you; and, from what you have said, I fancy he is in love with you after all."

A shade of annoyance came over Arana's face.

"Where is Mr. Sabin?" she asked, suddenly. "Heaven! is he drowned?" she continued, wildly, as she became conscious that they were alone upon the rock.

"Here he is," answered Hugh, about to spring forward to help the fisherman bring Jasper up the steep.

She grasped him by the arm and held him back a moment.

"One word," cried Arana, hurriedly. "Mr. Truhart, forget what I have said to you—I was delicious from fright—the sudden accident. I knew not what I said."

"Miss Larchmont," he answered, earnestly, "your slightest wish is law to me."

He raised her fingers to his lips, with the courtesy of a knight of the olden time, and pressed a kiss upon them. Then their eyes met for one moment, and that electric flash that tells the heart's secrets passed between them—a secret which, in their relative positions, was to remain for ever unspoken. He dropped her hand with a shiver—for he was an honourable man, and conscience rebuked him—and he hastened to the rescue of the man who was to stand between him and happiness for ever.

Jasper was quite insensible when they got him upon the rock, but Nep was an adept in remedies on such occasions, and he soon relieved the half-drowned man of the large quantity of salt-water he had swallowed.

Jasper heaved a sigh, and life struggled back into his breast.

"He will do well enough," said Nep. "You watch him, and I'll take Miss Nancy to the house, and come back for him."

He caught Arana up in his powerful arms, and she was no light weight, with great ease. Hugh rather demurred at this, but she silenced him with a look.

"Let Nep have his way," she cried; "he will consider it sufficient reward, and the only one he will take, for saving my life."

Nep carried Arana to the cottage with as much gentleness as if she had been an infant. His appearance there was the first intimation the household had of the accident. He was overwhelmed with questions, but answered none. Leaving her in her uncle's care, he hastened back to Hugh and Jasper.

Joshua Larchmont was very much excited about his niece's accident. He ordered her to bed at once, and sent for the doctor.

"It's a great pity!" he cried, frequently; "and when he was alone by himself he still repeated it—'It's a great pity!' but he added, 'that she was not drowned. It would have saved a world of explanation.'"

### CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Nep returned to the rock, he found Jasper pretty well recovered, and talking gaily of the accident. He was still too weak to walk, however, and so he said to Nep:

"My juvenile Colossus I am afraid you will have



to carry me out of this, as Hugh tells me you did Miss Larchmont."

"What does he mean by Kerlossus?" asked Nep, opening his large eyes widely. "I ain't a Kerlossus!"

"Merely a playful allusion to your size and strength," answered Hugh.

"Wh-u-u!" cried Jasper, shivering in every limb.

"Let's get out of this—I'm chilled to the bone, and these wet clothes feel anything but comfortable."

They lifted him up between them, and supported his tottering steps over the rocks. He insisted on walking, for he was ashamed to be carried, as he said, like a child. The servants from the cottage, headed by Mr. Larchmont himself, met them, and Jasper was taken to the house.

"See that brave fellow rewarded," he said to Hugh.

Hugh detained Nep for that purpose; but the young fisherman would not accept the money he offered.

"Tain't no use to me," he said. "I'd do anything for Miss Raney; as for the chap, I fished him out because they say he's going to marry her."

"But why did you kiss her when you brought her out of the water?" demanded Hugh, suddenly, fixing his eyes keenly upon his face.

Nep blushed to the very roots of his hair.

"I couldn't help it," he stammered, ingenuously; "she looked just like a sleeping beauty done in bees-wax."

Hugh laughed at the oddity of the reply.

"She wasn't cross about it, was she?" queried Nep, eagerly.

"O, no," answered Hugh—"she was scarcely conscious at the time. Indeed she thought it was me."

"You?" cried Nep, looking at the young man curiously. "Why should she think that? You ain't any relation of hers, are you?"

"O, no," replied Hugh, a little embarrassed by the keen scrutiny of those honest eyes. "We never saw each other until yesterday."

The fisherman whistled gently to himself.

"I see how the wind blows," he cried, with a knowing look. "Well, you are worth a dozen of t'other chap. Look here, you are a good-natured fellow; I'd like to have you do something for me."

"What is it?" asked Hugh, in surprise.

"Tell you to-morrow. See that yellow house down by the beach? That's where I live—with Mother Brace. Come to-morrow afternoon, and"—sinking his voice to a deep, mysterious whisper—"don't say nothin' to nobody—mind!"

Nep walked away, leaving Hugh very much bewildered at his singular request.

"That strange being is by no means a fool," he soliloquized. "That he loves Arana is beyond a doubt, but it is the love a faithful dog bears to a gentle mistress. Who could see her, and refrain from loving her?"

"Queer creature, ain't he?" cried Mrs. Molusk, the old housekeeper, appearing at the porch door, as Nep walked away.

"Who and what is he?" asked Hugh, knowing that Mrs. Molusk had been reared in the village, and was probably acquainted with all its inhabitants.

"He's a castaway," replied Mrs. Molusk, nothing loath for a little gossip. "Captain Brace found him, in a deserted vessel at sea, when he was about five years old—the only soul on board. It was only a common kind of fishing-smack, and the crew had probably been washed overboard in a gale, leaving the child in the cabin. He wasn't a bright child at all, and seemed to have thumped about in the cabin and injured his head some way, and Captain Brace used to say his brain was injured. He couldn't get anything out of him about himself, and so he called him Neptune, as that was the name of the boat. I remember when the captain brought him home he acted just like a born idiot. All he could say was 'I see cold.'"

"He is very far from being an idiot now," remarked Hugh.

"Well, that's true enough; he seemed to outgrow it; but he was always strange, and never acted like other boys; never took to learning, but was always in and around the water, taking to it as naturally as if it had been his element. And then he grew up such a monster of strength; it's a merey he's so good-natured, or he might have killed some of the other boys when they were teasing him; for I do believe he could knock an ox down with that big fist of his. Well, the captain used to take him to sea with him every voyage; until once, when Mrs. Brace was rather poorly, he sailed without him, and coming back in a heavy gale, he was blown on the rocks yonder; the schooner went to pieces, and the captain was drowned in sight of his own home. His body came ashore the next morning. It was hard to say who felt the worst about it, Nep or the widow. Then the captain's good deed met with its reward, for Nep has been like a son to Mrs. Brace ever since, and kept her in comfortable circumstances. The only

thing against him is, that ever since Mr. Larchmont built this cottage as a summer residence, now about a dozen years ago, whenever Miss Raney is here he is always hanging about the premises. People do say he's in love with her; but, you know how people will talk. There, there, I'm as bad as the rest; here I have kept you shivering in your wet clothes. You'll catch your death of cold. You can take a glass of wine, and then change your clothes before dinner."

Hugh followed Mrs. Molusk into the house, and went to the apartment he shared in common with Jasper, to change his wet garments for dry ones.

"What a pity he isn't Raney's intended," Mrs. Molusk confidentially said to herself; "he is the most proper man, to my thinking."

Thanks to the virtues of Mrs. Molusk's wine and a change of clothing, Arana and Jasper made their appearance at the dinner-table, looking but little the worse for their accident. Mr. Larchmont, a benevolent-looking gentleman, with a smooth face, and glossy brown hair carefully brushed back from his forehead to conceal his bald spot, presided; but he appeared ill at ease and far from happy. He did the honours in a nervous way, glancing furtively at Arana, as if he expected some sudden and disagreeable question from her. The others attributed this to the accident, thinking it had unnerved him. Arana was also strangely reticent, colouring whenever her eye met Hugh's, whose efforts to appear unconscious were rather too conspicuous.

Jasper was the only one of the party really at ease. He was hilarious over their "ducking," as he called it, and jested incessantly over the whole affair. He did full justice to the viands, and drank the champagne which the others sipped. He soon got in such a comfortable state of mind that he did not observe the abstraction of the others; but he did not forget that two important things were to be settled upon that day; Mr. Larchmont was to render up an account of his guardianship, and the time appointed for his wedding with Arana.

When the young men withdrew to the verandah to discuss the inevitable cigar, Mr. Larchmont requested Arana to follow him to the little chamber in the second story, which he called his "study." He placed a chair for her, carefully closed the door, and then seated himself opposite to her, with his back to the light, his face in the shadow.

(Concluded next week.)

## SIR ALVICK.

### CHAPTER XLIII.

THE words of Ross Chaffton declared that he was able, without attacking her reputation, to prove that her son was not the lawful heir of Galmount; but that Hugh De Lisle was; that it did not accord with the plans of the conspirators simply to use their power to turn out Lord Peter. They could do that easily, if they could prove Hugh De Lisle to be Edward Charles, and that he could be so proved was very plain from their desire to compass the destruction of the true heir.

They did not fear Lord Peter's claims, nor his hitherto undisputed right to be Marquis of Galmount. They seemed to consider all that a secondary matter. It was the fact that Hugh De Lisle lived which they feared.

They were willing that Lord Peter should be considered by all to be a son of Lord Hayward, but Hark Varly must be believed to be the elder son, the heir, the real Marquis of Galmount.

If she did not yield, did not, in fact, become their accomplice, she would be remorselessly crushed, even though they might gain thereby nothing more than a malicious, useless triumph. Her reputation was in their hands, to crush or to uphold as they pleased.

She must consent to act with them, if only until this true heir, Hugh De Lisle, were for ever out of the way. She could not tell what proofs existed which might establish Hugh De Lisle as Marquis of Galmount, but she knew they must be very strong to so alarm these bold and unscrupulous men.

Ross Chaffton detected her fears, and said, boldly:

"My lady, we may as well come to the point at once. Either Hark Varly or Hugh De Lisle will be proved to be Lord Edward Charles. It cannot matter to you whether it be Hark Varly or Hugh De Lisle, so long as your son, Lord Peter, is not Marquis of Galmount. You can have no love for either of them. You may, however, have a hate for Hark Varly. But you cannot gratify that hate without destroying your reputation and the legitimacy of your son. We shall not permit you to incline in favour of Hugh De Lisle, unmolested by us. If, by any act of yours, my lady, Hugh De Lisle becomes

Marquis of Galmount, we will attack your reputation, and prove that Lord Peter is not the son of Lord Hayward. If Hugh De Lisle be removed, as we intend he shall be, Lord Peter must give way to Hark Varly. So you had best act with us, for two very strong reasons—first, to save your reputation, and secondly, for the sake of Lord Peter."

"You appear to think that Lord Peter has no will of his own," remarked Lady Matilda. "Suppose that I agree to remain quiet in the matter, or even do all I can to forward your views, but that Lord Peter refuses to yield his title and estate without a trial before his peers—what then?"

"You do not wish to tell him that he is not the son of Lord Hayward?"

"Of course not."

"It may not be necessary, Lady Matilda, for you to tell him—"

"No, not for anyone to do so."

"From my knowledge of Lord Peter's character," said the highwayman, with a sneering smile, "I am very sure that he would not be so terribly mortified as your ladyship imagines. Of course he would be greatly mortified at losing the title and estate, but as for his sensitiveness in the matter"—here Ross Chaffton shrugged his shoulders and laughed, adding—"he has lived too much at court to care much for anything or anybody except himself."

"I will give you my decision in this matter after I have consulted with Sir Alvick," said Lady Matilda.

"He does not appear to be very bright at present, eh?" remarked Mr. Wharrie, mockingly. "I am all right, however, as I have his acknowledgment that I am his lawful heir."

"You have that!" exclaimed Ross Chaffton.

"Signed, sealed and delivered," replied Mr. Wharrie, nodding his head, rapidly. "All in the presence of Amos Jarles and Lady Aspa Ulster—"

"Do you mean that Aspa Jarles is in this house?" demanded Lady Matilda.

"Certainly she is. Lady Aspa Ulster is at this moment in Ulster Manor, and has been recognised by Sir Alvick Ulster as his wife."

"Sir Alvick, is this true?" cried Lady Matilda, in a bitter tone.

"She is in this house," groaned the baronet.

"And you have acknowledged her as your wife!"

Another deep groan from the helpless baronet, who dared not raise his eyes to the white and ghastly face of Lady Matilda.

"My heaven!" she exclaimed, fiercely. "You said all proofs of the marriage were destroyed."

"But they were not, you see, my dear lady," remarked Mr. Wharrie, gaily, as if the whole affair was one of the pleasantest things in the world. "Sir Alvick tore them up, buried them, and all that, but Billy Doon—don't suppose your ladyship ever heard of that gentleman?—fine fellow, if he were hanged—Billy Doon dug 'em all up, Mr. Ross Chaffton got 'em, then Mr. Amos Jarles got 'em—and now I have 'em."

Lady Matilda gazed steadily into the face of the speaker. She saw nothing there but triumph and power. She glanced at the face of the highwayman. It was dark and exultant. She turned her eyes towards the baronet. She could not see his face, for his head was bent down, and his features hidden in his hands.

Then Lady Matilda groaned, and cursed the day when she first saw Alvick Ulster, and sank into a chair, pale, faint, ill, and vanquished.

"Come," said Ross Chaffton, in an encouraging tone, "there is no need to be so overcome, my lady. No one need know all this except ourselves."

"Why not?" demanded Lady Matilda, sharply—with the sharpness of despair. "Is not that woman, Aspa Jarles, in this house to drive me forth with the brand of shame upon my brow?"

"By no means, my lady," replied Mr. Wharrie. "I will tell you something. Lady Aspa, not knowing that she was the lawful wife of Sir Alvick, married, and until lately believed herself to be the wife of—a certain gentleman whom she most fondly loves, and who fondly loves her. We have made excellent use of Lady Aspa's devotion to her supposed husband and the two children sprang from the marriage. Lady Aspa would rather be dead than be known as Lady Ulster. But we should have found it very difficult to convince Sir Alvick of our strength without confronting him with—ah, his wife, you know."

"Then she is not here voluntarily? She does not intend to claim to be Lady Ulster? She's not here to be avenged?" asked Lady Matilda, rapidly.

"Not at all. She will be very glad to escape as she came—in male disguise. So you see, my lady, we can arrange all this little family trouble very quietly among ourselves. Why," exclaimed Mr. Wharrie, with a burst of feeling, and unclothing himself all over the table, "why should we expose our little domestic troubles to the cold and un sympathetic eyes of the heartless world! Let us mutually yield a little of our private hopes and aspirations, for we all are

inclined to be too hopeful, ah, far too aspiring. Let us all be satisfied with what we can get; eh? You, my lady, shall remain the honoured, the esteemed, the noble Lady Ulster. The baronet shall remain unsuspected, unmolested. Lord Peter shall continue to be believed to be a son of Lord Hayward, a younger son. Lady Aspa shall be permitted to return to her supposed husband. It is very delightful, 'pon my word, to contemplate this quiet and amicable settlement of what will otherwise be a very dangerous piece of business, egad!" concluded Mr. Wharfe, knitting his brows and coiling up again.

"I will retire with Sir Alvick, and consider what you have said," remarked Lady Matilda. "You will meet us in the library some time after daylight. Come, Sir Alvick."

"Would you not like to have an interview with Lady Aspa?" asked Mr. Wharfe, carelessly.

"I have no desire to see her, nor to know who she is. We might meet hereafter, and the recognition would be very disagreeable to me," replied Lady Matilda, haughtily.

"Certainly; I applaud the sentiment—noble sentiments are my weakness, always were, am afraid they always will be," remarked Mr. Wharfe.

"I advise your ladyship," said Ross Chaffton, civilly, "to prepare the mind of Lord Peter for the coming event."

"Come, Sir Alvick," urged Lady Matilda, taking the hand of the baronet in her own. "Let us retire."

The baronet arose wearily. His lately erect and athletic form was bowed and tottering; he gazed about with a vacant, abstracted look, as if his mind were far away.

"Oh," thought Mr. Wharfe, "the poor, old gentleman will not give us much trouble. These little domestic affairs are too much for him."

"Sir Alvick," said Ross Chaffton, "will not fail to bear in mind the imperative necessity of taking speedy and effective measures for the capture of Hugh de Lisle. Let orders be given that he be shot dead at sight, or he may give all of us trouble."

Sir Alvick made no reply, but stared vacantly at the speaker.

"Lady Matilda," continued the highwayman, "as Sir Alvick seems not to be himself, Major Hark Varley will assume, with your ladyship's permission of course, the direction of affairs after daylight. Hugh de Lisle, I repeat, is undoubtedly, Edward Charles Fitz-Osborn, Marquis of Galmount."

"Major Hark Varley can do as he pleases, sir. Come, Sir Alvick."

"One moment, Lady Matilda," said Ross Chaffton. "I understand that Lord Morton is an inmate of Ulster Manor."

"Lord Morton came in during the night, sir."

"Did anyone accompany him?"

"Yes, but I have been told that he departed soon after he arrived, saying that important business demanded his presence in Ulsterborough."

"Thank you, my lady," said the highwayman, while his eyes glistened fiercely.

"Oh," thought the observant Mr. Wharfe. "My friend Chaffton is thinking of—nothing more."

Lady Matilda led the baronet from the room, he appearing to be wholly enfeebled in body and in mind.

"Well, Major," said Chaffton, when they had departed, "I think we have conquered my lady. As I wish to speak with Mr. Amos Jarles and Lady Aspa, I will leave you for a few minutes, and go with Mr. Hassan Wharfe to his apartment. I see that your mouth is a little swollen."

"Yes, from the blow that puppy struck me," said Hark Varley, firmly. "I will have his blood for it."

"I protest against making any disturbance with him, at least for a time," said Chaffton, with great sternness. "You are to have better revenge than his life. What good will having his blood upon your hands do you. If you are established as Marquis of Galmount, as we hope to bring it about, all will believe that you and he are half-brothers. As Mr. Wharfe was once kicked by him, a challenge from Mr. Wharfe is his right."

"A right which I magnanimously yield to Major Varley, so far as having satisfaction with swords is concerned," replied Mr. Wharfe, uncoiling and standing erect.

Chaffton took up one of the lamps on the table, and left the room with the attorney.

Hark Varley, when alone, cast himself upon the bed, saying:

"Great heavens, I am completely in the power of a highwayman, and that highwayman is my father! What a fate! What a fall for Hark Varley!"

#### CHAPTER XLIV.

WHEN Hugh De Lisle and Evaline fled from the keep into the storm and darkness of the night, the only thought of each was that of immediate escape.

Neither had any fixed course of action, beyond the mere determination to escape, and therefore, for several minutes, they hurried on blindly in the inky darkness.

Hugh De Lisle, however, soon reflected that some definite object must be struggled for, beyond simple escape from the keep.

The storm was at its height, and the rain fell in torrents, mingled with hail. The occasional flashes of lightning, when not so keen as to force them to close their eyes, enabled them to cross the great court-yard, and to make a laborious circuit of the immense mansion, until they had reached the avenue and park in front of the building.

Hugh De Lisle knew that their immediate recapture was impossible, and yet he feared to take shelter anywhere on the premises, lest an organised search being made, they might be found.

He was too used to storms of rain and hail to care at all for his own comfort, but he reflected that Evaline, though no tender and delicate court damsel, was far too gently reared not to suffer from the violence of the tempest. The hail itself was sharp and stinging, but from this he protected her head and face by taking off his coat and prevailing upon her to muffle them in it, wet and drenched as it was; some of the hail-stones being very large and stunning in weight.

But a greater danger than falling hail menaced them every moment. The tempest now and then uprooted some great tree and hurled it to the earth, while large branches, twisted off by the wind, were whirled through the air and dashed upon the ground.

Once the lightning struck a tree not far from them with a crash and roar that caused Evaline to cry out with affright, for Hugh De Lisle fell instantly, dragging her to the ground with him.

One of the fragments of the shattered tree had struck him a severe and prostrating blow upon the head, half stunning him for a moment.

He was upon his feet again in an instant, and he lifted Evaline in his arms, saying:

"You are not hurt, dear lady?"

"Oh no! But I thought you were killed, dear Hugh," she replied, as she clung tremblingly to him. "Ah, Hugh, dear heart," she exclaimed, "if anything were to happen to you, I would wish to die."

"I am not hurt, dear Evaline," he said, clasping her close to his bosom, though he knew that his scalp must have been fearfully gashed by the splinter which had struck him down so suddenly. "We must seek instant shelter somewhere. Pray watch for the next flash and try to discover where we are."

"I know where we are," replied the brave girl, reassured by his calm tones. "We are not far from the gamekeeper's house—I saw it—there! I saw it then!" she exclaimed, as a long, quivering flash illumined the night.

"A small cottage on our left?" asked Hugh De Lisle.

"Yes, and both Beavy and his wife will do anything to serve me. Let us go there, dear Hugh. We can remain until morning."

"Is it not too near the Manor, dear lady? Sir Alvick, on learning that we have escaped, may, despite the storm, send some of the disbanded soldiers at the Manor to seek for us at Beavy's house. Indeed, I remember that I saw one or two of Sir Alvick's men there yesterday."

"I do not know," replied Evaline. "Many of those who served under him in Holland came from London a few days ago to see him on business connected with arrears of pay for army service, and they were quartered anywhere and everywhere. But old Beavy and Laura his wife will do anything to serve me, I am sure. They do not like the baronet, and did love my poor father."

"Well, we will go there and remain at least until the violence of this gale is spent," said De Lisle.

With this determination they moved on as fast as possible, and after much toil and danger arrived at the door of the cottage.

The occupants of the cottage were up, for lights were burning within, and Hugh De Lisle rapped boldly at the door. It was opened almost immediately by someone who said in a hearty tone:

"Come in, come in quickly, whoever you are, for the wind scatters embers all over the room."

Hugh De Lisle and Evaline entered at once, and the door was closed with haste by the speaker, who immediately exclaimed, as his eyes fell upon the face of the young lady:

"My life! It is our young mistress, Miss Evaline! Wife! wife!"

The speaker was a hale, stout old man, with white hair and beard, but still powerful and active, with a kind and genial face. As he spoke, a woman, not so old as he was, but far past middle-age, advanced hastily, saying:

"Why, indeed, it is my dear young lady. Oh, this is very sad! She is dripping wet," and at once

she seized upon Evaline and led her into another room, exclaiming—"You must have dry clothes immediately, my dear lady."

Hugh De Lisle was greatly pleased with the kindly tones of the old man and his dame, and said:

"My good man, I pray you give me shelter for a few moments—"

"As long as you like, young sir," replied the old gamekeeper, heartily, though he stared very keenly at the face of the young gentleman. "Take this seat by the fire, sir. We had it made, although it is June, to dry the garments of surly John, as we call him, who came in half-drowned an hour or so ago."

Hugh De Lisle had already noticed the presence of two men in the room, seated near the fire, smoking. One of them he had instantly recognised as John Roffton, who stared at him with a stolid indifference which apparently declared that he had never seen Hugh De Lisle in all his life.

The other man Hugh De Lisle also recognized at a glance as Park Harrison, late a chaplain in one of Sir Alvick's brigades, a tall dark-faced fellow, with beetling brows, scanty gray hair and unprepossessing visage.

This man stared at the young gentleman indifferently for a moment, and then his pipe fell from his mouth and was shattered upon the hearth, while he gazed at Hugh De Lisle with wide extended eyes, in which were both wonder and terror. He turned very pale, too, and grasped the edge of the stool on which he sat, as if suddenly much alarmed and ready to take instant flight.

Hugh De Lisle, however, took no notice of either John Roffton or Park Harrison, but drew a chair close to the fire, being wet and chilled through.

"I will draw a fresh pitcher of good old ale, sir," said the hospitable gamekeeper. "It will keep the cold out, sir—nothing like good old ale for a wet body, sir. If you like strong waters, sir, I have some fine old Holland gin as well as good French brandy, there near Mr. Harrison, who prefers strong waters."

Hugh De Lisle, who was sorry that he had spoken at all in the presence of Harrison, and wished the man were anywhere but there, bowed, and Beavy left the room upon his hospitable errand.

Mr. Harrison, whose preference for strong waters of the strongest kind was written upon his very red and luxuriantly blossoming nose, having partially recovered from his surprise, filled a tumbler with gin and drank it hastily, smacking his lips as he did so, as if giving thanks.

He then leaned over towards John Roffton, and whispered:

"If I didn't know he was dead more than half-a-year, I might swear he was Captain Hugh De Lisle, though I didn't know him very intimately."

"His ghost must haunt you," replied John Roffton, in his surly tone. "You had something to do with the findings of the court-martial. You swore to something they alleged against him—that you saw him talking to a French spy in his tent, didn't you?"

"Perhaps I did. But you were a soldier, a corporal in his company—before you changed your name—don't you think this person is remarkably like Captain Hugh De Lisle?"

"Not a bit!" bluntly replied John Roffton.

And in truth there was very little of the former appearance of Captain Hugh De Lisle in the aspect of the young and persecuted officer as he sat there before the fire of the gamekeeper. Captain Hugh De Lisle had been noted for his admirable neatness and richness of uniform, and general elegant, soldierly person. As he sat there, wet, coatless, stained and soiled with mud and mould, his hair disordered and dripping, his face pale, and streaked with blood from the gash on the side of his head, he little resembled the dashing captain of cavalry, once a favourite officer of the great duke, and often called the handsomest soldier, as well as the bravest, in the English army.

"Peradventure and verily, I may be, I must be mistaken," muttered Harrison, who though once a sexton, and lately an army chaplain, was an hypocritical dog. "Yet such a resemblance I never beheld. I marvel much," he added, aloud, as he drew a soiled slip of paper from his pocket, and stared at the blotted lines upon it, "what Sir Alvick wrote hereon. It may be a matter of importance."

Now John Roffton knew well what the baronet had written upon the paper, for immediately after leaving Sir Alvick's study, when ordered to hasten to the gamekeeper's cottage, he had secretly opened the note and read its contents.

They were such as he did not like, and he resolved that though he would place the note in the hands of Harrison, as he had been commanded to do, it should be out of the power of the chaplain to read the contents. Therefore as he proceeded towards



the cottage, amid the darkness and storm, he crumpled it and soiled it most thoroughly.

"It is a pity you brought the note in your hand, Mr. Roffton," remarked Harrison. "You should have brought it in your bosom."

"Wasn't I wet through when I came in? The note would have been soaked into bits and blots," growled Roffton, as he puffed at his pipe. "I could not help falling down, could I, fifty times or more?"

"I can't make it out," continued Harrison. "It is all a blur to me."

"Then burn it," snapped Roffton.

"There is one word, I think, I can make out, Mr. Roffton. If the storm would only hold up a bit, I'd have gone over to the mansion. The word I make out is 'ceremony.' It's a pity you didn't wake me up as soon as you came in."

"I tried to. I couldn't. Your night-cap was too tight over your eyes," said Roffton, grinning.

"My night-cap. I never wore one in all my life." "I mean that," replied Roffton, tapping the bottle with his pipe-stem.

"Oh, I felt a weakness, and perhaps took too much of the spirits."

"You are very bad with weakness."

"I am indeed," said Harrison, with a longing glance at the bottle.

"Your weakness will be the death of you. Weakness kills a great many people."

"Perhaps this gentleman can make out the contents of the note," said Harrison, looking towards Hugh De Lisle, and extending the paper.

De Lisle was at first inclined to put it aside, for he detested the man, but catching a sly wink from the deep-set eyes of Roffton, he took the note and studied it closely.

The ink had spread over the paper, and though Harrison had carefully washed off the mire which coated it when it was placed in his half-drunken hands, the effect was to still farther blur the letters. Nor was Harrison much skilled in reading written characters.

Hugh De Lisle, however, was a keen scholar, as well as soldier, and expert in deciphering all kinds of chirographical riddles, and after a moment's scrutiny, he read these words:

"Harrison, come immediately to the manor house to perform a marriage ceremony. On your life do not fail to come immediately. Be on the look-out for Hugh De Lisle. He is about. ULSER."

"There is a word which looks like a name," said Harrison, as Captain Hugh continued to gaze at the paper. "And I think the name is Hugh De Lisle."

"I think I can read it—aright," remarked Hugh De Lisle, calmly, and in a disguised voice.

"You do? That is clever," cried Harrison. "I'll drink to your health, sir, if you will."

"Listen," said the officer, as if reading from the note. "Harrison or Harrington—"

"Harrison, sir, no doubt. That is my name," interrupted the fuddled chaplain, who was no more fitted for his holy office than he was with wings.

"Ah, yes—Harrison, go over to Ulsterborough in the morning to perform a marriage ceremony. I will meet you there at the Hugh De Lisle Arms."

"Oh, I was sure I made out the name of Hugh De Lisle," cried Harrison. "So I am to meet Sir Alrick at the inn, at the Hugh De Lisle Arms. You see, sir, the keeper of the inn is an old soldier who served under Captain Hugh De Lisle—you look very much like him, sir—he was shot in Holland for treason."

"That's a lie!" said John Roffton, gruffly.

"So the sentence read," persisted Harrison. "At any rate one of the captain's soldiers has recently rented the inn—it used to be called the Ulster Arms—and changed its name to the Hugh De Lisle Arms, in honour of his officer."

This was no news to the captain, who had received shelter and aid from the soldier who had turned inn-keeper, but the fact had suggested to him the pretended reading of the note.

"So I am to meet the baronet at the Hugh De Lisle Arms," said Harrison, extending his hand to receive the note.

But John Roffton had no desire that the man should have another opportunity to study the letter, and taking it from the hand of the captain, he let it slip from his fingers into the fire, where it instantly became ashes.

"What does it matter, since you know what was written, Master Harrison, and there's an end of the puzzle," growled Roffton. "Now do as you said you would: drink the gentleman's health."

"I will," replied Harrison, suiting the action to the word; but there was a covert sparkle in his eyes unperceived by either of the others. "And now I will go back to bed," he added, as the gamekeeper entered with a pitcher of foaming ale.

He arose, and staggering a little, left the room, muttering:

"If that is not Captain Hugh De Lisle, I am a fool. He did not read the note aright, I am sure. I heard a report that he had escaped the sentence. I'll slip over to the baronet's as soon as I can on the sly."

"Beavy," whispered Roffton, as soon as Harrison had departed, "there are dark doings going on, so see that Harrison tumbles into bed, and bolt him in."

"He is not so drunk as he was when we waked him," said Beavy. "I'll see that he lies down."

"Take him some more gin," urged Hugh De Lisle. "I do not like his face. I am not sure that he did not recognise me."

"You do not know me, sir," said the gamekeeper, exchanging his natural kind and genial face for a very sly and crabbed expression.

Hugh De Lisle gazed at him for an instant, and then grasped both the old man's hands, saying:

"Yes, I do. You are the person who placed a package in my hands, saying it was the gift of a fair lady."

"True," laughed old Beavy. "I had business there in Holland. Lady Matilda sent me over with some things for the baronet, and the day before I left London, a lady very closely veiled, gave me the package for you, and a good handful of gold for myself. I recognised the lady, though to this day she does not know it. It does me good to look at you, sir, for you favour my former lord, the late Marquis of Galmout, enough to make me stare."

"Do you know that I am an outlaw?" asked De Lisle.

"I know that my young lady loves you, sir, and John Roffton has often spoken of you to me, since we heard that you were dead. But I must look after Harrison," added the gamekeeper, hastening from the room.

"Never fear that Richard Beavy will not be your true friend, sir," remarked Roffton. "He does not like the baronet, although he is his gamekeeper. After the death of Lord Hayward, he entered the service of Sir Malcolm, and was much attached to him. He has retained his office ever since, and almost worships Miss Evaline."

"But as he so readily recognised me, corporal, after having seen me but once—"

"Oh, he has seen you more than once," interrupted Roffton. "He used to see you when you were in London, he has told me, and said he remembered you well, because he used to stare at you, from your remarkable likeness to Lord Hayward Fitz-Osborn."

"I fear this fellow, Harrison, has recognised me also. But if he goes to sleep half-drunk, as he is I shall be away from the cottage long before he awakes."

"You are weary and worn, sir. Had you not better change your wet garments for dry ones and lie down? You may have to travel fast and far—indeed, I know you will, after daybreak."

"Not far, I hope, corporal, as I have a good friend pressing my cause at court, and I am quite sure that my pardon will be at Ulster Manor by noon. Do you know Captain Frank Saybyrd?"

"I have heard of him as being a very hard fighter and favourite officer. I have never seen him."

"You can do me good service, corporal, if you will—"

"That, sir, I will always do, and perhaps far better than you have ever dreamed I could," interrupted Roffton, heartily. "You will be a greater man than you imagine, if all comes right."

"I hope so," replied Hugh De Lisle, smiling. "But I wish you would keep a sharp look-out for the return of Captain Saybyrd at the Manor House. He will probably be back about noon—"

"He is to bring the pardon, I suppose?"

"I hope so. I am very sure he will if the queen can be seen by him. If he returns and tells you he has the pardon, hurry to the Tangle—you know where it is?"

"Very well. It was there poor Lord Hayward died," replied Roffton.

"Yes, when I leave this cottage I will hasten there, and remain until I receive intelligence from you. You will not fail me, corporal?"

"Never fear for that, sir," replied Roffton, promptly,—though it had been his intention to hurry to London and obtain the release of his father from prison.

"Beavy and his wife must take care of Miss Evaline, until I am a free man again," said Hugh De Lisle. "Sir Alrick will make very close search for her, for he and Lady Matilda are determined to wed her to Lord Peter."

"Sir Alrick will have his hands full of another affair," remarked Roffton. "There is a fellow named Hassan Wharfe."

"Yes, I know all about that," interrupted Hugh De Lisle. "Far more than you do, for I overheard

a great deal while I was concealed in the study behind the effigy. It is a very bold plot and may be successful. I care not if it be."

Beavy soon after entered, and said:

"Harrison has tumbled across his bed, and is snoring for a wager. I have bolted his door so that he cannot get out that way unless he makes a noise. The windows are also fastened on the outside. But I think he is nearly dead drunk, and will sleep for many hours. Now, sir, as the storm shows no signs of abating, you had better lie down for an hour or two. Roffton and I will keep a sharp watch."

Hugh De Lisle was indeed very weary, far more from excitement than fatigue, though from that also he was weakened not a little. So yielding to the urging of his two friends, he changed his garments for a suit of the old gamekeeper's; and, lying down upon a couch, was almost immediately asleep.

#### CHAPTER XLV.

"GREAT Heaven!" said Lord Morton, staring at the disguised form and pale face of the unfortunate lady. "It is Lady Constance! It is my wife!" and then sank down into a chair, weaker, fainter, more unnerved than he had ever been in all his life.

Lady Aspa, for so we must now term her, for an instant seemed as nerveless as he was, but remembering how much was at stake, she sprang from the bed, closed and locked the door, which had been readjusted upon its hinges after the forcible entrance of Sir Alrick and his party.

She then approached Lord Morton and knelt at his feet, with her beautiful eyes fixed on his. She loved him too profoundly to resign him without a desperate struggle. Fate had most suddenly brought them face to face, when they least expected such an event possible.

She had believed him to be far away upon the sea, off the coast of France. He had believed her to be in his beloved Morton Hall, with his two noble boys nestling on her bosom.

The brave and hardy nobleman of the sea knew not what to think. He could only imagine something dreadful had happened. He swept his rich and massive hair back from his brow, and gazed at her in utter bewilderment.

Why was she there? Why in that coarse and unseemly garb? Was it really his idolised wife? Was he not dreaming in some horrible nightmare? What could it mean but disgrace, despair, shame and woe!

Such were the rapid, torturing thoughts of Lord Henry, Earl of Morton, as Lady Aspa, pale, disordered, her hair cut close to her head, her beautiful form disguised in coarse male attire, approached and knelt at his feet.

"Pardon, forgive me, Lord Henry!" she said, and her soft, sweet voice was the first thing that he recognised as really belonging to the wife he loved so fondly.

"What have you done, Constance?" he asked, hoarsely, for his amazement almost made him speechless. "Why are you here, and in this garb? and where are our children? Great Heaven! what does all this mean?"

"Lord Henry," she replied, still kneeling at his feet, "I have done you a terrible wrong—"

She paused, for her woe rose from her heart in a great bursting sob of agony, which threatened to stifle her.

He laid his hands gently upon her head, and gazed kindly into her face, saying:

"Constance, you have been my beloved wife these happy ten years and more. You have been the sunshine of my life, Constance. I know not what you mean, but I know that if you have done me wrong, others have forced you to fall. Ah, Constance, what have you done? Oh, my poor, darling, forsaken children!"

He took his hands from her head, and they dropped upon his knees heavily, while he gazed at her, and groaned:

"Oh, my heaven! Why is this?"

"Lord Henry, hear me," she said, whispering, for she dreaded lest the sound of their voices should reach some listening ear. "Since I have been your wife never have I wronged you, nor been untrue to you even in thought, so help me heaven. The wrong I did was in not telling you before I wedded you that I had been the wife of another."

A great groan, not loud, but deep and full of agony, rolled from the quivering lips of the admiral.

"You were the wife of another?"

It was a fearful surprise to him who had loved her so well. The revelation that she had concealed this secret from him was a painful blow upon his heart, but he felt that she had not told all. He repeated her words and trembled as he waited to hear more.

"I am unworthy of your love, Lord Henry. I was

ever unworthy of your love," she said, in a calm though rapid voice. "I should have told you all before I became your wife."

"Wait," he exclaimed, grasping her hands. "You say you have been a good and true wife to me ever since you called me husband? You will swear that Constance."

"As heaven is above me—on the lives of our children, Lord Henry, I swear that," she replied, solemnly.

"I believe you, Constance, my wife. Now rise from your knees and sit here upon mine and tell me all, as you used to tell me your little vexations yonder in dear Morton Hall."

She gazed up into the noble, forgiving face as he bent over her, awaiting her rising. But she did not rise. She dared not sit upon his knee—not yet. She bent her head and said:

"The man whom I wedded before I married you, Lord Henry, is not dead."

"Is not dead?"

The words fell from his trembling, pallid lips heavily, like three great drops of blood forced from the very centre of his heart.

He sprang to his feet, quivering with anguish of soul, and recoiled from her, a look of horror blanching his face. But the crushed appearance of the woman he had loved so well, her stifled sobs, her bent head, her disguised form, removed his anger and it melted away as suddenly as it had flamed up.

"He lives," he said, "but the law may have made you free, Constance. He lives, but you were divorced from him? He was a brute, a villain perhaps, and you severed the tie by law?"

He bent over her, and listened eagerly for her reply. It was made promptly and clearly, for despair was in her soul.

"He and I are husband and wife now, but I did not know that I was his wife when I married you my lord."

"Who is he? What is his name?"

"Sir Alvick Ulster," was the reply, with a great sob.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Lord Henry, recoiling as if stabbed to the heart. "Did you say Sir Alvick Ulster?"

"Sir Alvick Ulster—the master of this baronetcy. But oh, my lord, I pray you hear all, and you will not hate me; you will pity me."

Lord Henry heard her without interrupting her, except with a brief question now and then, and when she had told all she said:

"And this is quite true, my lord; now let me see my two darling boys once more, and then depart from Morton Hall for ever."

"By my soul!" exclaimed Lord Henry, clasping her to his heart, "you shall return to Morton Hall with me, as soon as I have settled matters with these scoundrels. You shall be no man's wife but mine, and I think I can manage the affair so that there shall be no scandal, beyond a few days of idle gossip. You shall be speedily divorced from Sir Alvick. Now leave all to me, for we have the rascals in their own net. Hasten back to the room you left—I hope your absence has not been discovered. Deceive them with the appearance of despair and helpless obedience. I will be near at the proper time, and so will another we know of. Hurry back to the room, and if possible, do not permit them to suspect that you have left it."

Lady Aspa, now full of hope, embraced the noble gentleman, and hastened back to the apartment in which she had left old Jarles in a drunken slumber.

(To be continued.)

**PORTRAIT OF MARIE DE MEDICIS.**—An interesting discovery has been made at Paris of a portrait of Marie de Medicis, of the date of 1602, when the Queen was 28 years of age. Her Majesty is represented in the florid style of Rubens, with a large collar of guipure on her neck, half covering a necklace of white pearls, to which is attached a cross of bright steel, over a dark silk moirée dress, with a band set with precious stones round the waist. The blonde hair is crisped and rolled round the head, and surmounted with a small black cap. The eyes, of a blueish gray, are full of life, and impart great animation to the picture. The treatment of the accessories and the execution of the work leave no doubt that it is the production of the younger Pourbus.

**CULTIVATING DYSPEPSIA.**—PLAIN TALK FOR SENSIBLE PEOPLE.—"If I were called upon," said James I., "to provide a dinner for Satan, his bill of fare should consist of roast pig and a pipe of tobacco for digestion." From the manner in which two-thirds of our adult population treat their unfortunate stomachs, one might suppose that they were as willing to destroy their own health as King James would have been to sicken Satan. In most countries,

people who indulge in alcoholic drinks, take them at most times, or immediately after eating, when the membranous lining of the stomach is in some degree protected from their inflammatory action by a poultice, so to speak, of masticated food. But the American convivialist prefers to swallow his liquid poison when there is nothing in the organ into which he decants it to qualify its fiery principle, or prevent it from taking immediate and full effect upon the viscera with which it comes in contact. The vicious wretch who throws vitriol in the face of his enemy scarcely misuses him more horribly than one of our "perpendicular drinkers" misuses his own stomach. Is it any wonder, then, considering the outrages which the people of this country commit upon the internal machinery, that dyspepsia is a national disease?"

## FACETIÆ.

A CONSTABLE in Kentucky, in publishing some personal property for sale, put up a notice with the following clause—"I will expose for sale, the 5 day 1866 uv Jan won lytle rone horse, or so much tharof as ma be nesary to satish end gument."

A TAVERN INCIDENT.—"What are you about, you black rascal? Twice have you roused me from my sound sleep to tell me that breakfast is ready, and now you've awoke me by attempting to pull off the bed clothes! What the deuce do you mean?"—"Why, massa, if you isn't going to git up, I mas hab de sheet anyhow, 'case dey'r waitin' for de table-cloth!"

## UP TRAIN AND DOWN TRAIN.

"What do you mean by an 'Up Train'?" inquired a rural passenger.

"A train whose engine explodes and blows up the whole concern, of course," replied the conductor.

"Then what do you mean by a 'Down Train'?" inquired verbatim.

"What else could it be but a train whose engine gets off the track and plunges down the bank or into the river, with the carriages after it?"

"To which of the two does this 'ere belong?"

"We can answer no such question in advance."

A WELL-KNOWN judge, when he first came to the Bar, was a very blundering speaker. On one occasion, when he was trying a case involving a right of property to a lot of pigs, he said, "Gentlemen of the jury, there were just twenty-four pigs in that drove—just twenty-four, gentlemen—exactly twice as many as there are in that jury-box."

"WELL PREPARED."—A Fifehire man recently took his child to the minister to be baptised, who asked him, "Are you prepared for so important and solemn an occasion?" "Prepared!" he echoed, with some indignation; "I ha'e a firlo' o' bannocks bakin', twa hams, an' a gallon o' the best Hieland whiskey; an' I wad just like to ken what better preparation ye could expect frae a man in my condition o' life!"

## ACCIDENT-INSURANCE.

An agent of an accident insurance company regales the public with the following authentic facts:

"Near Portland a poor man fell from a loft, and broke his neck. He received his insurance, a thousand pounds, from the company, with which he was enabled to set up in business, and is now doing well."

"A boiler exploded, blowing the engineer into the air quite out of sight. He will receive fifteen shillings a day until he comes down again."

NO MORE CROSSES.—At Auburn, some time since, the wife of Thomas Cross gave birth to a daughter, this being the seventeenth time that Mrs. Cross has made her husband a happy father. Mr. Cross on this occasion said, "Amelia Jane"—Mrs. Cross's christened name is Amelia Jane—"this is not to be borne!" "But it is born, my dear," said his wife, meekly. "Don't get angry, my love, we all have our little crosses to bear." Mr. Thomas Cross groaned in bitterness of spirit: "Amelia Jane, this has been going on long enough; if you have any more little crosses to bear I shan't help you to support them!"

## A VOLUNTEER POLICE WANTED.

"Constables, form, form," might be the first line of a song by which Mr. Tennyson will perhaps do London the service of creating a Volunteer Police. Under the orders of Sir Richard Mayne, the metropolitan policemen are employed in taking dogs into custody, and seizing hoops, instead of looking after thieves and apprehending footpads. As appears from the letter of "E." in the *Times*, not one police-officer can be spared at Scotland Yard to watch a house which it is known that burglars intend to break into. The regular policemen have as much work as they can do in the service of catching curs and mongrels, and hoop-hunting, assigned to them by their chief. Literally, the police have gone to the dogs. Roughs and footpads range the streets,

committing outrages unmolested, enjoying a system of non-intervention. Society is in a state of absolute invasion.

There are many spirited young men, possessed of wealth, but not provided with work, who do that of coachmen, for want of better. They are driven by idleness to drive four-in-hand. Some pass their time away in pigeon-shooting, others kill it at billiards, and by various other unproductive amusements. The practical duties of policemen would afford them ample pastime with the advantage of excitement, attended by the new and pleasurable feeling of conscious utility, rewarded by the thanks of business and the smiles of beauty, in the balcony, as well as at the area. Constables, therefore, form a firm; that is to say, swells, get sworn in as special constables, and organise yourselves into divisions. Crisp your truncheons; go forth on your beats; and arrest the street robbers, whilst the paid protectors of the public and preservers of the peace are occupied, by command of Sir Richard Mayne, in the capture of canine vagabonds, and a crusade against children.—Punch.

## TWO SIDES TO A QUESTION.

Squire: "Your name Smith?"

Smith: "Yessir."

Squire: "Ah, I understand you're the man who gives so much trouble to my keepers!"

Smith: "Ax yer pardon, Squire, your keepers is much more trouble to me!"—Punch.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.—Mr. Beales has recognised the Spanish Revolution, which is very much gratified. He is, however, less satisfied with Vesuvius, and means to call the attention of the Reform League to the conduct of that mountain, and possibly to propose a vote of censure on the eruption.—Punch.

## "TIMERE DANAOS," &c.

Young Fangle: "Look here, Briggs. You know it's inconvenient for me to settle that little account of yours now; and if you come bothering about it, hang me if I don't order another suit of you!"—Punch.

## "THE SLEEPER AWAKENED."

Old Gentleman (disturbed in his nap after dinner, at the club): "Eh? Well? What's the matter? What do you want?"

Servant: "Beg pardon, sir, but one of the gentlemen wished me to mention that you was awakin'."—Punch.

## THE NEW EXCHANGE; OR, NO ROBBERY COLUMN.

There is a newspaper devoted, we hear, entirely to publishing offers of exchange. Hitherto the plan, though economically valuable, has not been generally taken up, and this may be owing to the want of a medium open to all comers with any possible sort of proposal. Such a Column we now place before the public.

1. I have two volumes of Tupper by me, one partly cut, the other uncut, and as good as new, which I wish to exchange for the three vols. of Macaulay's *Critical Essays*. JUNIOR SORH.

2. Sir.—I have by me a Pantomime in MS. never acted. I would exchange it for a brand new umbrella, a pair of boots to fit, and a good overcoat.

P.S. I would exchange my present position for a better, any day of the week. Open to an engagement.

3. I want to exchange a first-rate gun, very strong and heavy, and has not been used for thirty years, for three good Alderney cows, or a Broadwood's piano for my daughters.

Address, *Pharmer Copia*.  
4. I have a beautiful supply of vestments, viz. chaubles, copes, and stoles, by me, also several handsome censers, which I should be glad to exchange for a small quantity of honesty, humility, docility, and good, sound common sense. To all these would not be right; but Exchange is No Probas.

RITUALISTICUS, Brighton.

5. I want to exchange with anyone who has two thousand a year, paid quarterly, and nothing to do for it.

Address, *TEFFENCE, City*.

6. Mrs. Dash has a temper of her own. If any lady hasn't got one, she will be happy to effect an immediate exchange. Anything will be taken.

D.

7. I have got two curious old sixpences: date unknown. I will change them for two shillings with anyone.

BANGOR.  
8. Miss Spinstra has a very handsome ring, given to her, years ago, by her grandmother. She will exchange it for a wedding-ring, to be given to her by her husband.  
MARIA.—Punch.

The roughs of London are about to present a testimonial to Sir Richard Mayne, as some slight acknowledgment of the manner in which he has assisted them in their violent efforts to get a living.



**BARON JAMES DE ROTHSCHILD** has built a princely residence, in the centre of a park, which is bounded on the north by the Rue de la Bienfaisance, on the east by the Rue de la Miroirville, and upon the south by the Boulevard Haussmann. It contains 20,000 square metres, which have cost 500*fr.* each, or a total of 10,000,000*fr.* It is surrounded by an iron fence and planted with trees and shrubs. The superb chateau, which is nearly finished, is in the style of Louis XIV.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CAPTAIN PETER.—Apply to the Spanish Embassy, 7, Portman-square.

JOHN ROBERTS.—If your lawyer sued for your divorce in *forma pauperis*, his charges are diabolical.

T. THOMAS.—Thomas Zumalacarrqui, the Spanish Carlist general, was born in 1788, and died in 1836.

HOWITT.—To the man of strong will, and giant energy, possibilities become probabilities, and probabilities certainties.

MOWERAY.—Tabard is a herald's coat, or short jacket, without sleeves, which on its first introduction, in the middle ages, was worn by the military.

THEODORE.—Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, the philanthropist, was born in 1780, and died in 1845. Her life, written by her daughters, was published in 1847.

H. G.—The words *baso solo* are used in organ and pianoforte music, to indicate that certain bass notes are not to be accompanied by chords in the treble.

J. S. B.—To remove spots from the face: take three ounces of rose water, one drachm of sulphate of zinc; mix, bathe the spots with it, gently dry; then use a little cold cream, which also dry gently off.

IVORY.—1. There is nothing injurious in the materials you mention; take equal quantities of each, and mix well together. 2. Most creams, being of a cooling nature, are good for the complexion.

ADA.—Your handwriting is not bad, but requires improvement; practice frequently and carefully, and endeavour not to form the letters quite so sloping, as it renders the words indistinct.

HENRY.—"A Life of Morland" was published in 1806, two years after the artist's death. It is, in all probability, out of print; you may, however, find a copy among the second-hand booksellers in Bookellers'-row, Strand.

ANTIQUARIAN.—1. The Archaeological Institute of Great Britain, 16, New Burlington-street; secretary, W. Lodge, Esq. 2. The Society of Antiquaries, Somerset House; secretary, C. B. Watson, Esq. 3. Membership is attained by election.

SABRINA.—1. Your husband dying intestate your legal share would be two-thirds. 2. Why not, to avoid all disputes hereafter, get your husband's medical adviser to prevail upon him to execute a will?

LOWELL.—Our superfluities should be given up for the convenience of others; our conveniences should give place to the necessities of others, and even our necessities to the extremities of the poor.

C. O. S. A.—Blackening is now generally made with ivory black, treacle, luscious or sweet oil, and oil of vitriol; the proportions vary, and a variable quantity of water is added, as paste or liquid blackening is required; the mode of making being otherwise precisely the same.

A. M.—The following is an excellent cement: dissolve half an ounce of gum acacia in a wine-glassful of boiling water, add plaster of Paris sufficient to form a thick paste, and apply it with a brush to the parts requiring to be cemented.

BOGOSLOFF.—You can obtain such a situation only by application to the master or owners of a ship. Your earnest desire, however, to be employed in some "light capacity," is much against your chance of success in a line of life in which hard work is the first requirement.

T. JONES.—We believe the insurance office you name to be of the highest respectability. We cannot, however, recommend one in particular. The safest plan at all times is to choose from among the oldest offices, in spite of the alluring offers held out by their juniors.

ROINALD.—*A priori* means from the former; from the cause to the effect. *A posteriori* means from the latter; from the effect to the cause. These are phrases which are used in logical arguments to denote a reference to its different modes.

B. G.—Pentecost signifies fiftieth, and the solemn festival of the Jews; so called because it was celebrated fifty days after the feast of the Passover. It is called the Feast of Weeks, because it was kept seven weeks after the Passover.

CLARKE.—A conspiracy to obstruct an employer in carrying on his or her business, by persuading their workmen to leave them, in order to induce them to make a change in the mode of carrying on their business, is an indictable offence.

ALABRIC.—The Board of Trade considers all matters especially relating to trade, and the Colonies; it consists of a president, vice-president, and several high officers of state, though it is practically managed by a president and vice-president. It has the general superintendence of all

matters relating to merchant ships and seamen; exercises a supervision over railways, government schools, and museums of science and art, the registration of joint-stock companies, &c. It also collects and publishes statistics of the revenue, trade, commerce, wealth, population, &c. of the United Kingdom and its dependencies, as well as of foreign countries.

G. S.—If, as you state, both you and your intended wife prove careful and industrious, you could live upon £1 a week. Many thousands of successful men have commenced life upon a lesser sum. Providing you have been prudent enough to have provided goods and chattels sufficient to furnish your humble home, take time by the forelock and try.

THE HUSBAND OF AN OLD SCRIBE.—An illegitimate son cannot, according to the Heralds' College, assume his father's crest. In cases where illegitimate children have been permitted to take their father's arms, as in the case of the descendants of Charles II., the "bar sinister" (a sign of illegitimacy) is invariably placed thereon.

GRABOY.—The first regiment of dragons was raised in England in 1681; Charles II., at the restoration, established a regiment of Life Guards, to which he added one of Horse Guards, and two of Foot Guards; a third regiment of Foot Guards was raised at Cullinstown, on the borders of Scotland.

ALICE.—Many persons complain of weariness of heart, but the destiny of the most wretched among us is not wholly dark; it is the miserable custom of mankind to sorrow for what they have not, instead of rejoicing for what they have. Happy, thrice happy, are those favoured ones whose oasis of contentment is found in their own home.

STOW.—The name "Merry Andrew" was first given to a physician, Andrew Borden, who lived in the reign of Henry VIII., and who, on some occasions, on account of his facetious manners and good-humour, appeared at court, in 1547. He used to attend markets, and fairs, and harangue the people, by whom he was called "Merry Andrew."

S. Q.—The mole-rat is a genus of animals belonging to the order Rodentia or Gliræ, and are natives of the Cape of Good Hope; it is about the size of a rabbit, and burrows underground, like its prototype, the mole, throwing up large hillocks, which are exceedingly dangerous to travellers on horseback; there are two varieties of this animal at the Cape, one called the sand-mole, and the other the Cape mole-rat.

## THE STREAM.

As the quiet flow of a summer stream,  
When its ripples are gilded by the sun's bright beam,  
When it beats on its breast but flows 'neath bright,  
And its waters flow on in cloudless light;

Thus clear is the look of our life new-born,  
When our souls reflect but the hues of morn,  
When none of the sorrows of earth are known,  
And its joys and its hopes are seen alone.

But as winter's wave in its sweepy sway,  
Crashes and flings the frail flowers away,  
And the rain-burst streams from some mountain height  
Stain the rivulet oaks as silver bright;

So our after years, in their sweeping course,  
With their late regrets and their vain remorse,  
Shall tarnish the face of youth's joyous dream,  
As will winter's torrent that summer stream. I. H.

PERCY.—The horses and carriages (whether hired or otherwise) of volunteer officers and soldiers are exempt from the payment of toll, when going to, or returning from, any place appointed for exercise, inspection, or review, or on any other public duty; such volunteer officer or soldier being in the uniform of his corps. The penalty for falsely personating a volunteer, with intent to evade tolls, is £1.

CLARK.—*Modus decimandi*, in law, is a term applied to any customary mode of tithing, arising from immemorial usage, and differing from the payment of one-tenth of the annual increase; it is sometimes a pecuniary composition, as tithes per acre for the title of land; sometimes it is a composition in work and labour; sometimes, in lieu of a large quantity of crude or imperfect tithe, a less quantity at greater maturity is received.

STRANGER.—The "cheapest and quickest way" to get married is to cause the banns to be published in a church at some distance from the district in which you reside; one of the parties, however, must have resided in the parish in which the banns have been published fifteen days before the ceremony can be performed. You must have lived alone, indeed, if you have no married friend who can advise with you in so important a matter.

PELHAM.—The ancient silver penny was the first silver coin struck in England, and the only one current among the Anglo-Saxons. The penny, until the reign of Edward I., was struck with a cross, so deeply indented, that it might easily be parted into two for halfpence, and into four for farthings; hence these names. Copper penny and two-penny pieces were coined at Birmingham in 1797, and were accounted the finest of our copper currency.

NANCY.—When milk "turns" this effect is caused by the development of an acid in the liquor. This chemical change may be effectually prevented by adding to the milk a small quantity of bi-carbonate of soda; the addition is by no means injurious to health; on the contrary, bi-carbonate of soda aids digestion. One of the great dairies of Paris employs no other method but this for preserving the milk it keeps on sale.

JENNY.—There are so many various scents, it is impossible to enumerate them all. *Roadolletta*, *havana*, and *essence of verbena* leaf, are excellent perfumes. 2. To remove superfluous hair, the safest plan is as follows: The hair should be perseveringly plucked out by the roots, and the skin, after having been washed twice a day with warm soft water, without soap, should be bathed with milk of roses. 3. If after some time the hair should again begin to grow, have recourse to the above remedy.

MARK.—"The retreat of the Ten Thousand" is the title given to the celebrated retreat of the 10,000 Greeks, conducted by Xenophon, over a tract of 8,465 miles through the very heart of Asia. It arose from the circumstances of an expedition undertaken by the younger Cyrus, 401, B.C., against his brother Artaxerxes, King of Persia. This expedition is remarkable as being the first long march of which we possess a detailed account, and it is also the oldest extant document which gave to Europeans any

precise notion of the countries watered by the Upper Tigris and Euphrates.

AN ANXIOUS MOTHER.—1. Your boy being but eleven years of age, and yet so unmanageable, be kind and patient—set him a good example of kindness and affection, and send him to school, and if in another year he still desires to go to sea, use your best means to get him apprenticed to a ship-owner, or if you have interest sufficient to get him into the Royal Marine School so much the better. 2. To make a black dyk procure some acetate of iron mordant, and boil it in a decoction of madder and logwood.

E. D. B.—The kings who previous to their ascending the throne were Princes of Wales were Edward II., Richard II., Henry V., Edward V., Henry VIII., Edward VI., Charles I., Charles II., George II., George III., and George IV. The Crown Princes who died Princes of Wales were Edward the Black Prince, Edward slain at Tewkesbury (son of Henry VI.), Edward (son of Richard III.), Arthur (son of Henry VII.), Henry (son of James I.), Frederick (son of George II.).

HUGH DE LAKE, eighteen, 5 ft. 5½ in., fair hair, handsome, has good prospects, and is very respectably connected. Respondents must be about the same age.

S. DA. Q. (a widower), forty-air, and a first-class professional. Respondent must possess a little money. A widow preferred.

ANNIE, brown eyes and hair, medium height, handsome, but has no fortune. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and have a good income.

IDA, eighteen, medium height, fair, brown eyes, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be dark, tall, and fond of home.

ALICE and HARRIETT.—"Alice," nineteen, 5 ft. 3 in., dark eyes and hair, and very fond of home. "Harriett," seventeen, rather dark, and good looking.

JAMES SANDER, twenty-four, seaman in H.M.S. Duke of Wellington, dark hair and eyes, 5 ft. 4 in., good looking. Respondent must be tall, dark, and fond of home. About twenty-one preferred.

MARIE and EDITH.—"Marie," nineteen, tall, fair, dark eyes, and domesticated. "Edith," seventeen, tall, blue eyes, fair, and musical. Respondents must be gentlemen, tall, and in good positions.

ALICE and ELEANOR.—"Alice," twenty, tall, and dark. Respondent must be fair, tall, good looking, and easy to do but a draper. "Eleanor," eighteen, tall, and fair. Respondent must be tall, dark, and good tempered.

MARIAN R., seventeen, 5 ft. fair, brown curly hair, hazel eyes, rather pretty, and a kind disposition. Respondent must be elderly, have a good income, and be of a loving disposition. Handwriting good.

POLLY, ANNIE, and KATE.—"Polly," nineteen, dark, and good looking. "Annie," eighteen, very fair, blue eyes, golden hair, and fond of music. "Kate," twenty-one, dark eyes and hair, tall, and handsome. Respondents must be respectably connected.

FORE TACK and MAIN BOWLINE.—"Fore Tack," twenty, 5 ft. 6 in., hazel eyes, light brown hair, and good looking. Respondent must be pretty, respectably connected, and about seventeen. "Main Bowline," nineteen, 5 ft. 5½ in., dark hair and eyes; both seamen.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MERRY TAR is responded to by—"A Merry Girl," twenty, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, good looking, and good tempered. "Annie," twenty-six, 5 ft. 3 in., affectionate, and fond of home; and—"Louise," twenty, 5 ft. 4 in., dark brown hair, blue eyes, good looking, and domesticated.

ROBERT RUSSELL by—"Florence," nineteen, medium height, dark, handsome, and domesticated; and—"Lily M.," eighteen, fair, blue eyes, fond of home, and thoroughly domesticated.

GUS by—"Lottie," eighteen, tall, fair, hazel eyes, and dark hair.

J. T. J. by—"Rose," eighteen, medium height, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, and domesticated.

SWAYTAW JACK by—"Polly W.," twenty-one, and very pretty; and—"Lily M.," twenty-one, 5 ft. 1 in., dark brown hair and eyes, good looking, and domesticated.

EMILY CLAYTON by—"Henry Edgar V.," dark, tall, good-looking, and has a fortune.

NELLIE and LIZZIE by—"Willie."

HARRY by—"S. P.," forty-five, and a widower.

MIRUS by—"J. H. B.," nineteen, 5 ft. 8 in., light hair and complexion, blue eyes, and good tempered.

ROSS by—"F. W.," (a sailor), twenty, 5 ft. 4 in., dark, black hair and eyes, good tempered and affectionate.

D. W. (a widow) by—"G. H. W.," (a widower).

CONSTANCE F. by—"Patrick Heilmann V.," 5 ft. 10 in., tall, black hair, whiskers, and moustache, and dark eyes.

HARRY SOMERS by—"Isabel Wilson," seventeen, dark hair and eyes, tall, cheerful, and affectionate—"Mary," twenty, amiable, and pretty—"Mercy of Brighton," twenty, 5 ft. 6 in., dark hair, hazel eyes, good figure, pretty, affectionate, and fond of home—"F. M.," tall and fair—"L. F.," eighteen; and—"Minnie," seventeen, 5 ft. 3 in., blue eyes, auburn hair, fair, inclined to embonpoint, and thoroughly domesticated.

MAGGIE GILMORE by—"John Crocker" (a tradesman), tall, dark, and good-looking.

HENRY by—"Anne," twenty-three, 5 ft. 4 in., dark hair and eyes, respectable, domesticated, and fond of home; and—"Marianne," seventeen, brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, thoroughly domesticated, and respectable.

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